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Editors

R. GOPALAKRISHNAN

S. PANNEERSELVAM

GODABARISHA MISHRA

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PREFACE

Part One of this volume is a collection of essays contributed by well-known scholars who had participated in the National Seminar on "Postmodernism and Critical Theory" sponsored by Indian Council of Philosophical Research. New Delhi. The Seminar was held during August, 18-20, 1997, at the Radhakrishnan Institute for Advanced Study in Philosophy, University of Madras, and Dr. S. Panneerselvam, Professor at the Institute was the Director of the Seminar. Part Two of this volume consists of special articles.

We thank the esteemed Vice-Chancellor Professor Pon. Kothandaraman who evinced keen interest in bringing out this volume. Our thanks are due to Professor E. Sundaramoorthy, Director, Publications Division, University of Madras, for making necessary arrangements for its publication. We thank Dr. L. Anthony Savari Raj of Department of Philosophy, University of Madras, for his assistance in going through the proofs. We also thank M/s Avvai Achukkoodam, Chennai - 600 013, for their neat execution of the work.

Chennai - 600 005 R. GOPALAKRISHNAN

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PART I

1

TECHNOLOGY, POETRY AND DISCOURSE IN A POSTMETAPHYSICAL CONTEXT

KANCHANA MAHADEVAN

"... an intensive engagement with the early Heidegger left its marks on (my) work..."

- Jürgen Habermas.[1]

"... Heidegger has always been for me the essential philosopher"

- Michel Foucault.[2]

With his critique of foundationalist Western metaphysics, Martin Heidegger ushered in a new approach to subjectivity: the notion of *Dasein* as a Being-in-the-world. This has influenced critical theorists committed to the Enlightenment project of Universality and emancipation such as Herbert Marcuse and Jürgen Habermas. However, many postmodern thinkers such as Richard Rorty and Michel Foucault, also reflect Heidegger's influence. This is seen in their portrayal of the limits of the Enlightenment ideals of freedom and universality in whose place they advocate historicism and aestheticism.

This paper attempts to delineate Heidegger's critique of modernity by examining his approach to technology, poetry and discourse. Further, Heidegger's writings also reflect rudimentary glimpses of critical theory's aspirations of turning to everyday practices for philosophizing in a postmetphysical context. As a result of his destruction of Western metaphysics, Heidegger emphasizes the limits of finitude, contingency and worldliness: a recognition shared by both critical theory and postmodernism. Hence, this paper purports to reflect on the trends of postmodernism and critical theory in Heidegger's works to explore the possibilities for free human agency in a postmetaphysical world.

PART I

TECHNOLOGY, WESTERN METAPHYSICS AND ENFRAMING

Technology is identified by Heidegger as the root of modern era's crisis of homelessness. Heidegger's account of Western metaphysics, in whose context he comprehends the technological crisis, emphasizes the ontological distinction between Being and beings[3]. According to Heidegger, ever since Plato there has been the tendency to obliterate this difference by an emphasis on the ontic domain of entities. Being is not a substance or an entity, but the condition under which specific entities are intelligible. Heidegger sees the history of Western metaphysics as the history of Being made up of epochs[4]. Hence, with his destruction of Western metaphysics, Heidegger wishes to introduce the question of Being.

The twentieth century technological rationality is seen by Heidegger as a culmination of the recurrent foundationalist trend of Western metaphysics, initiated by Plato[5]. This trend consists in hankering after objectivity, which in turn is premised upon subjectivism. Since certainty makes objectivity possible, ideas have to pass the test of self-examination based on the criterion of clarity and distinctness. As a result of this relation between objectivity and the human mind, the human being in turn was treated by traditional philosophy as having an immutable and eternal nature. According to Heidegger, the Aristotelian rational animal, the Cartesian embodied spirit, Marx's social animal and the Nietzschean will to power, have all played this foundationalist role[6].

The current technological epoch is for Heidegger neither the exclusive outcome of human doing nor completely outside it[7]. The nihilistic expression of technology is a cultural space, opened up by Being (facticity), in which human beings find themselves. Hence, according to Heidegger, in order to see the nature of technology's crisis and find ways of overcoming it, its essence has to be comprehended. Thus, rather than merely "gape" at the various technological gadgets, the roots of the technical mode of Being have to be understood[8].

According to Heidegger, the essence of modern technology is enframing *(Gestell)*[9]. This consists in an emphasis on instrumental rationality and use-value due to a preoccupation with entities. Such an emphasis leads to a challenging mode of existence that regulates all of nature and human beings by converting them into standing reserves serving maximum self-interest. This can be illustrated by using Heidegger's own example where the earth is used for ore, ore for uranium, uranium for atomic energy, which is again used for other purposes[10]. This phenomenon is exemplified in the traditional metaphysical account of the subject as a disengaged

and sovereign reflector who is spatially located in the world[11]. The environmental destruction and the robotization of human beings in the twentieth century are symptoms of this Lord and Master approach of Western metaphysics[12].

The essence of technology reveals its origins in Being where it is seen as a contingent disclosure of Being that has infinite other disclosures[13]. The modern person who comprehends this will see how the contemporary absolutization of technology has impeded the manifestation of alternate modes of Being, such as the artistic one[14]. Consequently, the alienated person develops a free relation with technology to see the normative value of art, in its ability to rise above the constraints of modernity to dwell in Being.

Although, Heidegger understands technology as a destiny in the history of Being, it is not a fate that compels[15]. Hence, that individuals are shaped by their culture does not imply a blind pro-technology attitide that suicidally carries out technology's enframing features to its logical conclusion[16]. For such an atitude misses out the contingent dimension of technology by treating it as absolute. On the other hand, according to Heidegger, a helpless anti-technology attitide, which futilely rebels against it, is not appropriate either[17]. For by treating technology as the outcome of individual will such an attitude ignores it epochal aspect. Moreover, it especially overlooks how the entire civilization would collapse, if technology is opposed.

In his early work, *Being and Time*, Heidegger breaks away from the picture of a disengaged subject with the notion of *Dasein* as the unitary phenomemon of Being-in-the-world[18]. Due to its concernful activities, *Dasein* and the world have a reciprocal relation with each other. Further, since *Dasein* does not have an essence, it is not enmeshed in the problems of personal identity and other minds plaguing the history of Western metaphysics[19]. *Dasein*, according to Heidegger, is a human mode of Being, that is distinct from other modes of Being such as a piece of paper. Its distinctness lies in its active and self-interpreting worldly character, within the limits of finitude (death) and contingency (facticity)[20]. Its concernful encounter with ready-to-hand tools, such as papers and pens, opens up a world (region) of Being[21]. The latter is a contingent and historical totality of interrelations in which *Dasein* and the tool have a place. Thus, for example, the world of writers is opened up by *Dasein's* utilization of pens and papers.

In his early work, Heidegger details how *Dasein's* modes of Being can be either inauthentic or authentic[22]. The former, which consists in an absorption with entities, is exemplified in the public conformist realm of Das Mann[23]. Such a mode of existence is forgetful of Being because

it treats a specific, partial, contingent disclosure of Being as absolute. An authentic dwelling in Being includes the recognition of contingency, finitude and worldliness, which does not absolutize any specific disclosure of Being[24]. In his later writings, such as the *Letter on Humanism*, Heidegger shifts his focus from *Dasein* to culture in his ontological quest[25]. This shift, motivated by Heidegger's need to distinguish his philosophy from that of Sartrean existentialism[26], transfers the notions of inauthencity and authenticity from *Dasein* to culture. The technological mode of being is seen by the later Heidegger as inauthentic,[27] in not recognizing its limits of contingency, finitude and worldliness, by assuming an intransigent stance in its modern expression.[28] To resolve the resultant crisis, Heidegger aims at opening up fields of Being, such as art, that have been marginalized by technology. For art has the capacity to reusher the element of *poiesis*/bringing-forth prevalent in Greek times, whereby, the modern attitide of mastery can be replaced by that of a guardianship towards Being.[29]

The following section examines whether Heidegger's characterization of technology as enframing effectively captures the dilemmas of the current age.

PART II

RETHINKING THE TECHNOCENTRIC PREDICAMENT TECHNOLOGY AS ENFRAMING

Heidegger's ontological understanding of technology does not view it as an index of progress. Despite these differences, there are certain similarities that Heidegger's approach shares with positivism[30]. These include reductionism, dualism and an abstraction from nature. which are the outcomes of effacing all qualitative distinctions between technological relations by understanding them in a social vacuum[31]. According to Heidegger, technology as enframing identically alienates all human beings from their grounding in Being. As subjective mastery guided by calculative thinking over its radical other, namely nature, technology, on this view. has an immutable logic of its own. Yet, as argued below, this account of technology is problematic.

If technology is historically located, it cannot be a Heideggerian levelling process. Rather its bonds with society, economics and history will reveal that technology can have both beneficial and regressive effects on human beings. Thus, technology cannot be construed as an activity of mastery alone. Nor can technology identically enframe all sections of society by pitching human beings against nature. This can be illustrated with an example from Mumbai city. A common sight in Mumbai's traffic is a push cart, that is overloaded with gadgets, moving side by side a swanky high-tech car, equipped with a mobile

phone. However, there is no place for such distinctions in Heidegger's account of technology as enframing. He equates mechanized agriculture, the atom bomb and the racial extermination of the Jewish people by Nazis as all examples of enframing[32]. However, this equation is untenable. Mechanized agriculture can be labour saving and is to be lamented only from the perspective of losing direct contact with nature. Yet even a premodern plough does not permit a direct contact with nature. Again, nature does not exist in abstraction, but is always apprehended through human activities. The atom bomb as a weapon of destruction is developed in the context of hostility amongst warring nations by the weapon industry. Hence, the economic, social, political forces that have to be brought in for comprehending the atom bomb are qualitatively different from that of mechanized agriculture[33]. Similarly with the holocaust, the forces that led to the development of destructive technology include racial hatred, which again differ from those resulting in mechanized agriculture. Although the issue of ecological destruction is common to all these examples, it once again is not an abstract phenomenon, but a historical one.

Further, to lament that mechanized agriculture destroys the environment is to assume that nature lies outside human activity in pristine purity. It ignores that human activity such as taking a walk, sculpting or ploughing occurs within nature and transforms it. There may be contexts where cultivation of cash crops for profit have led to environmental destruction. But in contexts where the profit motive is not emphasized, mechanized agriculture does not necessarily cause an ecological imbalance. Again, the atom bomb and the holocaust show that the use of technology which destroys the environment also destroys people, for human beings are a part of the environment. Thus, ecological devastation has to be understood historically in relation to issues of social justice. To evade this relation is to privilege ecological issues over those of justice. This in turn is premised upon a dichotomy between nature and human beings, where the latter either masters or submits to the former.

From the above it is clear that any critique of science and technology would also have to take into account the social relations of domination. To argue, like Heidegger, that technology per se dominates is to put it outside the social or the ontic. Further, it also overlooks how the positivist ideal of science as an objective, value-neutral, and an expert discipline itself emerged in specific social conditions of seventeenth century Europe, as Sandra Harding has shown[34].

Dana Villa, however, argues that Heidegger's characterization of technology, which points to its normalizing effects on all subjects, has similarities with Foucault[35]. Yet Villa ignores that, unlike Heidegger, Foucault does not confine himself to abstract philosophical text[36] as his

genealogies operate within the ontic realm of the social. Nevertheless, Foucault's analyses are also limited by reductionist tendencies, which he shares with Heidegger's. By reducing all social relations to power, Foucault does not distinguish between types of power[37], *à la* Heidegger.

A historically oriented approach will reveal a reciprocal relation between natural sciences and technology, as Heidegger himself observes. Further, this understanding will also show that the larger context of the world of human practices cannot be ignored. The research done in laboratories are no doubt governed by use-value and employ an observer perspective[38]. However, the shared background of activities plays a role in the subjects chosen for research, as well as, in the intelligibility of the scientific activity. The scientist/the technologist, who inhabits the social world, uses a language that is learnt in the context of an intersubjective web of practices, as Karl-Otto Apel points out[39]. Further, the validity claims of propositional truth raised in science arise when there is a breakdown in the wide web of activities to which the scientist belongs. Thus, scientific hypotheses, experimental tests and validity claims are connected with the inter subjective framework of language[40]. It is in this context that Frederic Jameson's account of technology, following Ernest Mandel, as evolving from steam driven to electricity-run to electronically charged, between the nineteenth and twentieth century through changes in the capitalist economy can be comprehended[41]. Thus, science and technology do not constitute the thought processes of single individuals, nor are they obscure ontological forces underlying human action. Rather, following Antonio Gramsci, Scientists and technologists have to be understood as workers or actors, rather than thinkers. This perspective will enable one to view nature and the human being in an integrated non-dualistic manner[42].

Heidegger himself, in his early work *Being and Time*, recognizes the relation between the objectivating attitude of the socialized individual *Dasein* towards an entity, as a present at-hand, and its tool using capacity, as a ready-to-hand[43]. Yet although Heidegger laments that the history of Western metaphysics has ignored the concrete. lived dimension, he himself does not follow this dimension by exploring *Dasein's* ontic (social) practices. For in *Being and Time*, the public world is one of inauthentic conformism from which *Dasein* can wrench itself only through a resoluteness. In his later writings, solitary poetry alone can offer salvation from technocentrism. Heidegger's hostility to the social can be seen in his comment that in order to change society one must understand it[44]. This in turn would reveal its subjective foundations, because of which it must be overcome rather than transformed. Clearly. Heidegger reifies the

social realm into an entity, a solipsistic subject on a wide scale, that can be approached only from a positivist perspective. The pragmatic turn, initiated in *Being and Time* is not followed through by Heidegger to recognise the heterogeneous plurality that constitutes the social due to his ontological preoccupations.

Meditative Thinking and the Past

Commentators such as Hans Sluga, Fred Dallmayr and Dana Villa have argued that *Dasein's* authentic life is not asocial[45]. They argue that the resolute *Dasein* of *Being and Time* has to recognize its contingent, existential relation with a shared facticity and heritage, within whose parameters authentic life is chosen[46]. Thus, for example, by choosing a hero from the past, *Dasein* makes itself authentic[47]. This could be extended to Heidegger's later writings as well, where the poet's receptive thinking ushers in the value of art by remembering the pre-Socratean shared past. Authencity, thus consists in looking at the familiar in unfamiliar ways[48]. Although this line of argumentation rightly calls attention to *Dasein's* shared heritage, it overlooks that the resolution or receptive thinking by which *Dasein* repeats the past is internal thought and not shared dialogue. Further, as Karsten Harries points out, Heidegger does not clarify the criteria by which the past hero can be chosen at present[49].

Heidegger's nostalgia for the Greek way of life and their aesthetics of existence[50] is an articulation of a remembrance of Being. This thinking has a reference to a specific ontic past, namely the Greek period in Western history. Yet Heidegger excludes from it empirical aspects such as anthropology, economics or politics. Heidegger, consequently, ignores the role of active appropriation in both a specific understanding of the past and its relevance to the present and the future[51]. The Greek past, for example, is not necessarily revealed as a tolerant aesthetics of existence only. For it also contains elements of slavery and exclusion of women. Given this, it is not clear why Heidegger's memory is only confined to the glory of art in Greek civilization. An alternate approach to the Greek past would consider these exclusions and their relation with the duty-based approach to politics. Despite its limits, during the Enlightenment period, such exclusions were called into question with the rights-based approach to politics. Similarly in India, the repressive features of tradition were questioned through people's struggles during the nationalist movement, which also allowed India to become consolidated as heterogeneous nation state.[52] Heidegger's historicist stance, which permits him to operate only within Western history, does not allow for the possibility of struggle in interpreting the past in a specific way[53]. The latter is linked with struggles against forces of domination in the present web of

activities. In contrast, the Heideggerian poet thankfully eradicates all differences in the present, and thereby the past, by leaving everything as it is. Such a thinker says "yes" to technology by seeing it as an epoch in Western civilization[54]. Yet, by resisting the logic of reification through creative space, this thinker also says "no" to technology[55].

But it is also clear that Heidegger does not permit a fatalistic acceptance of technology's course, as poetry aims at resisting its absolutism. But the therapeutic attitude of poetry only provides a temporary shelter from the onslaught of technology. Heidegger is, subsequently, left with two nonintegrated zones of radical alterity, technology's instrumental rationality and poetry's creative spontaneity.

A consistent destruction of metaphysics requires the transformation of technology and its intergration with the region of creativity. This requires a critical thinking, rather than a meditative one, that is rooted in everyday discourse of finitude, contingency and worldliness.

Given these ambiguities the charges of decisionism and mystification, levied by Richard Wolin and Jurgen Habermas against Heidegger although strongly worded, are justified[56]. Hence, even though Dallmayr terms Habermas' observation of the absence of the intersubjective social dimension as hasty, he overlooks the abstract character of Heideggrerian letting-be,[57] that allows for a toleration of even inegaliterian differences. Furhter, Dallmayr is also oblivious to Heidegger's notion of technology, as an irreversible course of mastery, in whose context alone can letting-be have therapeutic value.

Technology and the History of Western Metaphysics

In his eagerness to deconstruct the logocentric bias of Western tradition, Heidegger simplistically treats technology as a culmination of the foundational metaphysical impulse initiated by Plato. As argued above, this homogenizes technology by reflecting a blindness towards the social, where technological apparatuses are sites of conflicts and contestations. On account of this textual approach, Heidegger elevates thinking over action in seeking the origin of technology in the origin of metaphysics. Further, in this etymological thinking, the primordiality of poetic dwelling in ancient Greece is remembered, to cope with the modern crisis of the lost link between technology and art.

Heidegger's historicist tendency of treating technology as exclusively Western is also the result of confining himself to the internal framework of philosophical texts.[58] He reproduces the solipsistic individual on the larger scale of society, as it has been argued above. Heidegger's reading of philosophical texts, in abstraction from the social (ontic), results in treating the entire history of philosophy as

PREFACE

Part One of this volume is a collection of essays contributed by well-known scholars who had participated in the National Seminar on "Postmodernism and Critical Theory" sponsored by Indian Council of Philosophical Research, New Delhi. The Seminar was held during August, 18-20, 1997, at the Radhakrishnan Institute for Advanced Study in Philosophy, University of Madras, and Dr. S. Panneerselvam, Professor at the Institute was the Director of the Seminar. Part Two of this volume consists of special articles.

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Chennai - 600 005 R. GOPALAKRISHNAN

merely acknowledges the space that is opened by his destruction of Western metaphysics through his identification of freedom and ontology. Yet in stopping at this juncture, Heidegger merely affirms the indeterminate and variegated force of Being that is beyond human grasp. But the momentous significane of lifting the constraints of metaphysics will become clear only by rethinking the link between freedom and human agency. To evade this reflection is to merely assume that all human action is inherently teleological. Such an assumption is, once again, the outcome of Heidegger's circumvention of the ontic dimension in which shared social activity occurs. If, as according to William Barrett and Dallmayr, letting-be as freedom is sensitive to intersubjective plurality to enable a wise usage of technology, the ontic cannot be severed. The cautious tolerance, implied by letting-be, presumes each entity to be a self-contained tenuous emergence precluding a genuine interactive plurality. Heidegger's reluctance in this regard stems from his tacit adherence to the categories of Western tradition. Consequently, he reifies social relations by presuming human action to be mastery. This is especially indicated in his remark that, rather than any action, only a God can save civilization.[64] At this juncture one cannot help but observe with Villa that Heidegger radicalizes and yet obliterates human action. For by following the paradigm of Western metaphysical tradition, Heidegger substitutes making for acting.[65]

This inhibition towards exploring the social domain leads Heidegger to construe freedom either as mastery or as submission.[65] The former assumes the framework of metaphysics and makes all action teleological. The latter severs action from its link with agency. Both alternatives rule out the reference to the individual and collective responsibility necessary for freedom. For responsibility of this sort will have to be located in the intersubjective domain. The linguistic activity of discourse has such a potential. Yet Heidegger's dichotomy of mastery and submission, allows only for representative, literal language of mastery and the poetic language of anonymous submission. Consequently, non-teleological activity remains untraversed in Heidegger's *oeuvre.*

PART III

FREEDOM AND DISCOURSE

The destruction of metaphysics calls for a historically located critical thinking of technology. It will be argued below that linguistic activity facilitates this by situating critical thinking in the web of everyday activities.

Postmetaphysical Freedom

In a postmetaphysical ambiance freedom attains significance as there are no constraints of ultimate foundations. Such a freedom is not just a region cleared by impersonal Being, but is rather linked with the life-world (worldliness).[67] Subsequently, society is not an intractable totality, but is rather a hub of multitudinous collectivities. The latter include egalitarian differences such as cultural diversity, as well as inegalitarian ones such as class, communalism and partriarchy. Human agency can be understood as being constituted by such a society. In the context of the life-world, freedom is not a foundationalist mental reflection of self-sufficient subjects. Rather, a free agent is one who adopts a hypothetical attitide towards socially acquired and revisable interests. Indeed, in evaluating their needs, such subjects examine both themselves and their societies to question the relations of domination.[68]

Given the above, a postmetaphysical critique treats technology as a shared activity. Since to be human is to inhabit nature, which is a part of the life-world, the two cannot be severed in a discussion of technology. Hence, ecological destructions such as famines are not cases of technology's intrinsically debased mastery over nature. Since technology also dominates large sections of human society, ecological issues reflect social relations of oppression generated by the domination of sectarian interests such as class and gender. Technological activity in an inegalitarian society only accentuates the relations of domination, as the Nazi genocide of the Jewish people illustrates. But, a critique of technology does not necessarily point to an affirmation of premodern forms of life, in the manner of postmodernists who follow Heidegger.[69] Such an affirmation overlooks the tyranny of a hierarchical, duty-oriented and caste-based social order.[70] Further, a premodern attitude, of submission towards nature as the sacred other, does not do justice to the contingent, worldly involvement of human activity. In contrast to this, a critical approach aims at scrutinizing the interests that dominate technology in a demystified manner.

The freedom entailed in such a critique is one of reversing a social order in which differences of domination are enforced by technology. In this, the normative prospect of a transformed social order, with beneficial technology and egalitarian plurality, is very much at stake. For technology is not a historical other of nature, as both nature and technology form parts of the web of historically rooted activities.

Speech and Freedom

The Heideggerian poet's language is ill-equipped for the task of a historically sensitive ciritque of technology. For it overlooks the dimensions of finitude, contingency and worldliness that govern human

action. The everyday speech of ordinary people, however, has the potential for a democratic critique and transformation of technology. The activity of speech occurs in the life-world that is an inexhaustible store-house of rule-oriented collective practices.[71]

Although the life-world cannot be exhaustively explicated,[72] some of its skills can be reconstructed in a fallibilistic way. Following Habermas, the universal core of speech acts can be reconstructed to reveal their implicit dialogical and evaluative structure.[73] In a speech act, the speaker communicates to the hearer a propositional content, which also has an illocutionary (communicative) component. There are three levels on which the speaker and listener interact.[74]

(a) The semantic level of understanding the speaker
(b) The pragmatic level of agreeing or disagreeing with the validity claim
(c) The empirical level of developing a dialogical interaction on the basis of (a) and (b)

Thus, an intersubjective critical dialogue with the goal of consensus, rather than coersion or submission, is possible through speech acts. The latter reproduce and transform the lifeworld through their situatedness in it. Thus, communication, interaction and speech are linked together.

Such a Habermasian relation between language, interaction and communication in speech acts could be called into question. For this account of speech acts can be said to have over simplified the relation between language and communication, by ignoring the communicative distortions of everyday life.[75] Further, the Habermasian version of "normal" speech is belied by the imaginative uses of language in poetry and metaphor.[76] In response to the first objection, notice must be taken of the link between communicative deviations and social domination. A critique of the oppressive forces operative in such a society where dialogical distortions prevail would be necessary.[77] This in turn will have to proceed in ordinary language that presupposes the ingredients of freedom and equality implicit in speech acts.[78] With regard to the second objection, it can be argued that poetry intentionally deviates from ordinary language to emphasize a tension between the poet's imagination and the objective world.[79] Further, poetic imagination is not a private mental act, if the poet's identity is discerned to be socially constituted.

The nexus between language, interaction and communication also delineates how individual identities are actively acquired, sustained and even transformed through the process of dialogue.[80] Since all of this presumes the lifeworld, the latter is also similarly critiqued and transformed, albeit selectively, in this process. Hence, agents stand in a two-fold relation to their tradition.[81] As language users, they

are embedded in the implicit background of an infinity of practices that cannot be questioned as a whole. Yet in reproducing their identities, communicating actors also critique their tradition in a hypothetical moment when there is a breakdown in it. It is such a two-fold relation that allows Habermas' critical theory to escape the two extremes of idealistic universalism and cultural parochialism.[82]

To conclude, a critical theory, which aims at reconstructing the notions of freedom and human action in a postmetaphysical context is consistent with the early Heidegger's hermeneutics of everyday *Dasein*. Hubert Dreyfus has aptly observed that the early Heidegger's radicalism lies in questioning five traditional assumptions of Western metaphysics.[83] These include: explicitness, mental representation, theoretical holism, detachment and objectivity and methodological individualism. By supplanting these foundational assumptions with the shared background of everyday practices, the status-quo of domination by experts, whether that of a technocrat or a poet, is not the only route. Rather, there is potential for a fallibilistic critical theory that reconstructs the notions of freedom and human agency within a nonteleological world, of which nature is very much a part. Further, universalism in this context means, in Habermas' words:

> "That one relativizes one's own way of life with regard to the legitimate claims of other forms of life, that one grants the strangers and the others, with all their idiosyncracies and incomprehensibilities, the same rights as oneself, the one does not insist on universalizing one's own identity, that one does not simply exclude that which deviates from it, that the areas of tolerance must become infinitely broader than they are today."[84]

NOTES

1. See. Hubert Dreyfus and Harrison Hall "Introduction" in *Heidegger: A Critical Reader.* Edited by Hubert L. Dreyfus and Harrison Hall. (Cambridge. U.S.A. : Basil Blackwell. 1992). 2

2. *Ibid,* 1

3. James F. Ward. *Heidegger's Political Thinking,* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1995). 2; Hubert Dreyfus. *Being-in-the-world,* (Cambridge: MIT Press. 1991). 10-12: Martin Heidegger. *Being and Time,* (New York : Harper and Row. 1962). 25-49.

4. David Cooper. *Thinkers of Our Time: Heidegger,* (London : Claridge Press. 1996). 56. 57-58.

5. Martin Heidegger. *Martin Heidegger: Basic Writings,* (London: Routledge. 1978). 210. 215. 224-226. 229-230. 239. 243-245. 309. 319-320. 323-328. Frederinck A. Olafson. *Heidegger and the Philisophy of Mind,* (New Haven: Yale University Press. 1987). 156. 204. 214-18. also see. Cooper. 59-65.

6. Heidegger. *Basic Writings,* 224-26. 229-30. 243-45. 332: Olafson. 204-5. 210-11.

7. Heidegger. *Basic Writings,* 323-25.

8. *Ibid,* 313, 329-32. 333.337.

9. Heidegger. *Basic Writings,* 324-28.

10. *Ibid,* 320.

11. *Ibid.* idem. *Being and Time,* 86. 129. 177. 248: Cooper. 19-20.

12. Olafson. 219.

13. Heidegger. *Basic Writings,* 339.

14. *Ibid,* 339-41. Dana R. Villa. *Arendt and Heidegger. The Fate of the Political* (Princeton University Press. 1996), 128. 129.

15. Cooper. 67: Heidegger. *Basic Writings,* 330-34. 335.

16. *Ibid.*

17. *Ibid.*

18. Cooper. 22. 23-24: Heidegger. *Being and Time* 78. idem *Basic Writings,* 229. Josef Chytry. *The Aesthetic State: A Quest in Modern German Thought* (Los Angles: University of California Press, 1989). 388.

19. Heidegger. *Basic Writings,* 229: Cooper. 29.

20. I am indebted to Dana Villa for this expression. Villa. 117. 136; Dreyfus. *Being-in-the-World,* 15-25: Cooper, 39.

21. Heidegger. *Being and Time,* 97: Villa. 120-25: Dreyfus. 40-45.

22. Villa, 129: Heidegger. *Being and Time;* 68. 224: Dreyfus. *Being-in-the-World,* 26-28.

23. Villa. 125. 128; Heidegger, *Being and Time,* 153-68. 210-18.

24. Villa. 131-32.

25. Heidegger. *Basic Writings,* 214-15.

26. *Ibid,* 214-15. 232-33. 237-38.

27. Villa. 225.

28. Cooper. 61-64: Heidegger, *Basic Writings,* 218.

29. Dreyfus. *Being-in-the-World.* 338-339. Heidegger. *Basic Writings.* 332. 339-40.

30. Frederic Jameson. *Postmodernism or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism,* (Durham: Duke University Press. 1991). 34.

31. Stephen Eric Bronner. *Of Critical Theory and its Theorists,* (Oxford : Blackwell, 1994). 106.

32. Richard Wolin. *The Terms of Cultural Criticism: The Frankfurt School, Existentialism Poststructuralism,* (New York : Columbia University Press. 1992). 142: Jürgen Habermas. "Work and Weltanschauung: The Heidegger Controversy from a German Perspective". in *Heidegger: A Critical Reader,* ed. Hubert L. Dreyfus and Harrison Hall. (Oxford : Basil Blackwell. 1992). 201: Villa. 256 - 58.

33. As Tom Brass argues. analogously. such oppositions between world/culture and earth/nature is a common theme in the postmodern approach. For a detailed account of the various dichotomies. see. Tom Brass. "The Politics of Gender. Nature and Nation in the Discourse of the New Farmers' Movement". *Journal of Peasant Studies,* Vol. 21. No.3 & 4. (April/July 1994): 26-71. Also see. idem. "A-way with their world : Rural Labourers through the Postmodern Prism". *Economic and Political weekly.* (June 5. 1993): 1162-68. Such dichotomies reintroduce the irreconciable gulfs characterizing foundationalism such as the mind/body problem. The basic premise of these dichotomies is that they identify use (science) with abuse whose only remedy is a return to premodern. feudal notions of sacredness. This in turn reintroduces all the dilemmas of foundational metaphysics. Vandana Shiva's ecofeminism. which is a good example of this approach. thus. confines women to their traditional tasks of motherhood and nuturing. See Maria Mies and Vandana Shiva. *Ecofeminism,* (London: Zed Press. 1993). The prospects for emancipatory feminist theory are quite limited if technology/man is identified with homelessness and nature/woman is identified with home as

Shiva does. In juxtaposing alienating technology against the security of home or nature. Shiva is certainly very close to Heidegger. Further. both Shiva and Heidegger envisage the home as a haven where individuals can escape the problems of culture/technology. In this they skirt the issue of oppressions within the home prevailing in premodern and modern societies.

34. Sandra Harding. *The Science Question in Feminism* (Milton Heynes : Open University Press. 1986). 217-25. Ibid.

35. Villa. 268.

36. See for example. Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish : The Birth of the Prison,* (New York: Vintage. 1979).

37. Jürgen Habermas. *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity: Twelve Lectures.* (Cambridge MA : MIT Press. 1987). 280-86. Wolin. 181-87.

38. Jürgen Habermas. "A Reply to My Critics." in *Habermas: Critical Debates,* ed. John B. Thompson and David Held (Cambridge. MA : MIT Press, 1982). 274.

39. Karl-Otto Apel. "Wittgenstein and Heidegger" in *Critical Heidegger,* ed. Christopher Macann (New York : Routledge. 1996). 251. 256.

40. Habermas, "A Reply". 275.

41. Jameson. 34-36.

42. Antonio Gramschi as quoted by P. Sedgwick. See, P. Sedgwick. "Natural Science and Human Theory : A Critique of Herbert Marcuse" in *The Socialist Register, 1966,* ed. Ralph Milliband and John Saville (London: The Merlin Press. 1966). 185.

43. Heidegger, *Being and Time,* 76. 85: Apel. 252-54.

44. Karsten Harries. "Heidegger as a Political Thinker". in *Heidegger and Modern Philosophy : Critical Essays,* ed. Michael Murray. (New Haven : Yale University Press. 1978). 304.

45. Fred Dallmayr. "Ontology of Freedom : Heidegger and Political Philosophy". *Political Theory,* 12 (1984) 225-30: Hans Sluga. *Heidegger's Crisis* (Cambridge. MA: Harvard University Press. 1993). 136-37: Villa, 114, 119. 120.

46. Sluga. 137: Heidegger. *Being and Time.* 383. 384-85.

47. *Ibid,* Villa. 127-134-36: Dallmayr. "Ontology". 214-15.

48. Villa. 128.129.

49. Harries. 311. As Megill points out the issues of technology's ownership. organisation and interests are excluded by Heidegger. Allan Megill. *Prophets of Extremity: Nietzsche, Foucault, Derrida* (Berkeley: University of California Press. 1985). 146. Both liberalism and socialism are seen by him as inauthentic. As Bronner points out. Heidegger's poetic "Politics of Being" is arbitrary. See. Bronner. 118. Thus. Dallmayrian pluralism and fascism are possible outcomes of the poetic word. Also see. Wolin. 144-45: Habermas. "Work and Weltanschauung". 195-96. 198.

50. I am indebted to Foucault for this expression. See. "An Aesthetics of Existence". in *Michel Foucault, Politics, Philosophy, Culture : Interviews and Other Writings,* ed. Lawrence D. Kritzman (New York : Routeledge. 1988). 47-53. Foucault himself points out that there is a distinction between a sovereign. disengaged subject and a subject who is constituted by an involvement in practices.

51. Olafson. 194-224: Cooper. 58-60.

52. Bronner. 109. Postmodern thinkers often make this assumption. See. Richard Rorty. *Contingency, Irony and Solidarity,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1989). Peter Dews. *Autonomy and Solidarity : Interviews with Jürgen Habermas,* (London : Verso. 1992). 270-71.

53. Olafson. 204-205. Heidegger identifies science and technology as primarily Western. This theme is quite dominant in the cultural relativism of postmodernism. Yet as Aijas Ahmed points out on this "group egoism" view culture is converted into a self-contained

entity analogous to the unencumbered subject. Consequently, the dilemmas of solipsism are reproduced on the level of culture. See. "An Interview with Aijaz Ahmed". *Monthly Review* (July/August 1995). 56-57.

54. Megill. 179: Bronner. 106: Cooper. 86: Wolin. 138.

55. *Ibid.*

56. Villa. 127. 134-36: Habermas. *Discourse*. 150-52. Poetry cannot be deemed salutary on grounds of its marginality alone. For marginality is not an abstract idea. since it crystalizes around historical practices. it can be progressive or regressive. Aijas Ahmed points out how Tagore's works. that form a part of mainstream Indian literature. can be marginal in the U.S. See. Ahmed. 44-45.

57. Fred Dallymayr. 'The Discourse of Modernity: Hegel. Nietzsche. Heidegger (and Habermas)" in *Praxis International*. 8:4 (Jan 1989). 389-96.

58. Herbert Spiegelberg. *The Phenomenological Movement : A Historical Introduction* (Hague : Martinus Nijhoff. 1984). 411-12: Habermas. 159: Harries. 327-28: Thomas McCarthy. *Ideals and Illusions: On Reconstruction and Deconstruction in Contemporary Critical Theory* (Cambridge MA : MIT Press. 1991). 118.

59. Michael Foster has given a detailed analysis of the differences between classical Greek Philosophy and Modern Philosophy. See. Michael B. Foster "The Christian Doctrine of Creation and the Rise of Modern Natural Science". *Mind* (October. 1934). idem. *The Political Philosophies of Plato and Hegel* (Oxford : Oxford University Press. 1968).

60. Olafson. 133. 222: Dallmayr. "Ontology". 213-14. 228.

61. John Macquarrie. *Martin Heidegger*, (Richmond : John Knox Press. 1968). 50.

62. Heidegger. *Basic Writings*, 339: Brian Magee. *Men of Ideas*, (Oxford : Oxford University Press. 1978). 73.

63. Dallmayr. "Ontology". 207-34: Villa. 114-120: Magee. 71-72.

64. As Villa points out. Heidegger does show the limits of the teleological model of action dominant in Western philosophy since Plato. Yet as she herself admits. this is not followed through. as the distinction between teleological action and praxis is ignored by Heidegger. See. Villa. 245.

65. *Ibid*, 248. 259-60.

66. Wolin. 138-41: Habermas. *Postmetaphysical*, 208: Bronner. 117.

67. Habermas follows Husserl in using the term life-world to signify the inexhaustible domain of practices. which can only be reproduced in concrete situations in a piece-meal manner. Jürgen Habermas. *Theory of Communicative Action* (Boston: Beacon Press. 1984). 1:82. 83. 335-37: idem. *Legitimation Crisis* (Boston: Beacon Press. 1975). 4-5: idem. *Theory and Practice*. (Boston: Beacon Press. 1973). 17: idem. *Knowledge and Human Interests* (Boston : Beacon Press. 1971). 168-69. 211. *idem. Philosophical Discourse*, 298. 299.

68. Idem. *The Theory of Communicative Active Life World and System:A Critique of Functionlist Reason*, (Boston: Beacon Press. 1987). 2:74:idem. *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action*, (Cambridge MA : MIT Press. 1990). 100.

69. Michel Foucault and the eco-feminist Vandana Shiva are good examples of this trend.

70. For a detailed amount of this. see Tom Brass's article "The Agrarian Myth. the'New' Populism and the 'New' Right". in *Economic and Political Weekly*. (January 25. 1997). PE - 27 - PE - 42.

71. Habermas. *Knowledge and Human Interests, 168-69. 192-93:* idem. Philosophical Discourse. *298. 299.*

72. Idem. *Communicative Action*. 1:82. 83. 337. idem. *Philosophical Discourse*. 299.

73. Habermas. *Communicative Action*. 1:82. idem. *Moral Consciousness*. 106. idem. *Communication and the Evolution of Society*. (Boston : Beacon Press. 1977). 5: Wolin. 136-37;

David Ingram. *Habermas and the Dialectic of Reason.* (New Haven : Yale University Press. 1987). 36.

74. Habermas. *Communicative Action.* 1:98-101: idem. *Communicative Action.* 2:72 73. 74.

75. *Ibid.*

76. David Held. *Introduction to Critical Theory* (Berkeley : University of California Press. 1980). 396: Anthony Giddens "Reason without Revolution ? Habermas's Theorie des communicative Handeln". in *Habermas and Modernity* ed. Richard Bernstein (Cambridge MA : MIT Press. 1985). 16-17. J.B. Thompson "Universal Pragmatics" in *Habermas : Critical Debates,* Ed. J.B. Thompson and David Held (Cambridge Mass : MIT Press. 982). 128.

77. Habermas. *Communicative Action,* 1:296-300. 331-32. idem *Communicative Action,* 2:62-63.

78. *Ibid.*

79. *Ibid.*

80. Habermas. *Communication and Evolution,* 66: idem *Moral Consciousness,* 170: idem. "Justice and Solidarity : on the Discussion Concerning "Stage 6" "in *The Philosophical Forum* 21 (Fall- winter 1989-90) : 47-48.

81. Wolin. 135. 136-137: Habermas. *Moral Consciousness.* 100.

82. Habermas. *Communication and Evolution.* 123. Thomas McCarthy. *The Critical Theory of Jürgen Habermas,* (Cambridge. MA : MIT Press. 1978). 423.

83. Dreyfus. *Being-in-the-World,* 4-7: Habermas. *Discourse,* 148-150.

84. Dews. 240.

2

AGAINST ANTIREPRESENTATIONALISM RORTY AND AFTER

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This paper intends to argue against the antirepresentationalism propounded by Richard Rorty in recent times. Rorty in a series of writings has agrued that the classical philosophy of language as a study of the linguistic representations of the world is dead and that in its place a new way of philosophizing on language as a set of nonrepresentational social practices is thrown open. The new way of doing philosophy does not consider itself as an inquiry into the so-called "foundations of language and meaning" or into the "*a priori* conditions of language and meaning". Philosophy is now not a systematic inquiry into the structure of language and reality, but a method of edification,[1] a way of freeing oneself from the maze of such problems. Thus philosophy ceases to be a transcendental inquiry in the Kantian sense and is satisfied with its postmodernist way of understanding language and reality as a matter of conversation.[2] Philosophy itself is now a kind of text, a vocabulary and not an inquiry into the foundations of the text.

I would argue that the new way of doing philosophy especially Rorty's, cannot disown altogether the principle of representationalism underlying language and that it is not true to say that philosophy has no stake in the possibility of truth and meaning in the representationalist sense.

1. The Illogic of Representations

Rorty has argued that the notion of representing or mirroring both in the sense of mental and linguistic representations is not only useless but also illogical. The notion of mirroring is the legacy of the Enlightenment project of capturing the world in the network of the categories or the conceptual schemes. In analytic philosophy this notion has reappeared as that of picturing the world or representing it in the medium of

language.[3] The representations both mental and linguistic fail not because they are inadequate to represent the world but because the idea of mirroring is misplaced, being born out of a wrong philosophical model. Rorty writes :

> The picture which holds traditional philosophy captive is that of the mind as a great mirror. containing various representations - some accurate, some not - and capable of being studied by pure. nonempirical methods. Without the notion of the mind as mirror, the notion of knowledge as accuracy of representations would not have suggested itself.[4]

This picture of the mind and language as mirrors of the reality has suggested itself because, according to Rorty, the philosophers have failed to see the hollowness of the model and that they have necessary relationship between language and mind on the one hand and the world on the other.

The language-world relationship has led to serious philosophical misunderstanding because language has dogmatically been taken as the medium of the representations of the world. So argues Rorty, we have been misled into believing that language at any cost must represent. and of course it must represent in the unique way. Whereas language is, as ordinarily seen. never a medium, but a form of activity. a language-game and a social practice.[5] Following the later Wittgenstein. Rorty goes on to argue that language is a motley of language-games. i.e. forms of life that speak not about anything beyond themselves. They do not redpresent the world : the world-talk simply recedes to the background.

The classical signifier-signified ralationship is abolished or rather avoided as it not only betrays logocentrism of the Enlightenment but also pretends to construe language as an impersonal series of signs designed by a God-like being to represent the world. Accordingly language as the system of signs is taken to be the representation of the world in which the signifier has the transcendental necessity of signifying something beyond itself. The signifier is the medium of the signified and thus must look beyond itself. Derrida has put this logocentric predicament in the following passage:

> The epoch of the logos thus debases writing considered as mediation of mediation and as a fall into the exteriority of meaning. To this epoch belongs the difference between the signified and the signifier...[6]

Derrida's dissatisfaction with the logocentric predicament. like Rorty's. is due to the fact that there is a transcendental metaphysics of presence lurking around and that the logos holds the "metaphysico-theological roots"[7] of the philosophy of representation. The logos holds

the key to the understanding of language as the medium of representation of the signified by the signifier. Rorty, with Derrida, makes a common cause against the idea that there is an ahistorical, transcendental method of representation of the world. The historical origin of language and its contingency[8] do not speak in favour of its being a medium of representation except in the metaphorical sense of being about the world.

Rorty thus debunks the idea of representation as illogical and unsupported by the actual nature of language. He goes in for a radical notion of language which dispenses with the idea of mirroring altogether.

2. Language, Tools and Social Practice

Rorty's conception of language demands a rejection of the logocentric conception of the linguistic signs. It now highlights the discontinuous character of the linguistic signs. The signs and their use in the fabric of the human life constitute language. Language, seen in the new perspective, is an open-ended discourse, a series of discontinuous episodes or vocabularies. Each vocabulary is a discourse with structure of its own and so is only loosely connected with the rest of the discourses. All the discourses hanging together, however loosely, constitute the language. There is no unified vocabulary[9] or no single architectonic of discourse to constitute the monolithic language. Hence, Rorty argues, the idea of a universal structure of language must give way to the episodic, discontinuous, temporal or historical view of language. This, it is believed, can bring an end to the logocentric approach to language.

There are basically two arguments which Rorty adduces in support of his language-as-vocabulary thesis. They are :

1. The argument from discontinuity according to which the discourses or vocabularies are not continous or alike. Each is an individual unit of signification;

2. The argument from arbitrariness according to which each vocabulary is as good as any other and one is not more rational than the other. Each discourse is arbitrary being based on no reason or rational consideration.

Both these arguments have a postmodernist ring in that both are meant to show that language is itself an arbitrary and a contingent phenomenon devoid of any rational necessity.[10] They not only deconstruct the logocentic conception of an overarching language or discourse but also introduce the all important concept of difference[11] into the discourse. Difference in the Derridan sense pervades the discourse and destroys the logical conception of unity. Unity gives way to plurality and identity to difference. Thus there emerges on the scene the different linguistic spaces instead of the single infinite space of a universal language.

As regards the arbitrariness of the linguistic signs, there is unanimity among the postmodernist protagonists of language. They perceive the contingency of language as writ large on the face of what they call the text or the writing.[12] Writing which replaces speech as the basic form of language is taken to be a historical phenomenon and is thereby seen as soaked in time. There is therefore no rational necessity underlying it, no logos to support it. It is all a matter of accident or chance that writings are there and human beings use them for the purpose of communication.

Rorty provides an ethnocentric view of language to take account of the fact that language has been associated with a human community. Ethnocentrism marks the nature of the language-use which is backed by what Rorty calls the human solidarity.[13] That is to say, all linguistic activities are categorized and normatively organised because of the human solidarity in language-use. There is no *a priori* structure to explain the normative character of language except the fact that human beings behave and follow rules in a certain way.

What follows from this ethnocentric view of language is that language ceases to be taken as a medium of representation and that it is now viewed as a tool or instrument of communication. Language is taken as a set of social practices in the human community. Each linguistic discourse is the product of time and chance and is the instrument of the human community. Language in this sense serves the purpose of keeping the human beings together in the common pragmatic project of living and acting together. Thus we have reached the point:

> ...where we no longer worship anything, where we treat nothing as a quasi divinity, where we treat everything - our language, our conscience, our community - as a product of time and chance.[14]

Thus Rorty agrees with the anti-logocentic viewpoint that there is no language except the linguistic episodes which act as the social tools in the hands of the people in the community.

3. Deconstruction of Truth and Meaning

From the antirepresentationalist view of language outlined above it follows inevitably that the classical notions of truth and meaning disappear. Since language is not a medium of representation, the notion of truth as correspondence between languange and reality does not hold good. Rorty is insistent on the idea that the notion of truth disappears along with the disappearance of the notion of language fitting the world, that is, language mirroring the world. Thus just as the idea of representing the world is disowned, so is the notion of being "true" about the world.[15]

Rorty argues that the classical logocentric notion of truth evokes the image of truth as a transcendent concept beyond time and history. It suggests that truth has nothing to do with the actual use of language and the actual human community and that it is independent of and indifferent to the hopes and aspirations of the people. Such a conception of truth belies the actual use of the concept. In fact truth stands as a pseudo-name of the success of our beliefs in the actual transactions of language in life. Truth, according to Rorty, is the utility or success of our beliefs rather than their correspondence with reality. On this Rorty accepts the antirealist[16] move of modern times to counter the classical notion of truth as a relation between language and reality.

The antirealist argument is that the notion of truth as a bivalent property of the sentences is found to be inadequate as it does not reflect the actual use of language. Dummett, for example, argues that truth in the classical bivalent sense is a cognition-transcendent[17] notion and so fails to capture the cognitive nuances of the concept. There is therefore a need to make truth available in the cognitive discourse. Putnam[18] argues further that truth must be embedded in the cognitive discourse as an internal feature of the conceptual scheme and so must cease to be viewed as a transcendent concept. The classical view of truth takes language and truth from the God's point of view and so cannot but construe it as a transcendent notion. Rorty is in agreement with Dummett and Putnam on the cognitive nature of the concept but goes beyond them in demanding that the concept of truth needs deconstruction rather than reconstruction. That is, for him, there is no representationalist concept of truth. Truth is only a grand name for all the odd jobs it does in language.

Rorty takes meaning more or less on the same line as truth. The classical notion of meaning is no less deconstructible than the concept of truth. Meaning in the classical tradition has been associated with the linguistic representations which are supposed to explain the sense[19] of a sentence as consisting in the thought it expresses. Sense or thought is basically a representational concept; so meaning or sense must, according to Rorty, disappear if representationalism itself is suspect.

Meaning has been accorded a semi-ontological status in the classical tradition in view of the fact that it is explained either in terms of truth-conditions or the verification-conditions of the sentences concerned. So meaning has been invariably associated with the representations of the world in our language. There has been an underlying scientism or cognitivism in these theories of meaning. Rorty rejects scientism as it distorts the very nature of language; language, as already explained, is not a representation according to him. Therefore Rorty feels that meaning as an entity has no place in the discourse. There is only the discourse or the text without the extra-textual thing called meaning.

While accepting the later Wittgensteinian technique of explaining meaning in terms of use of language. Rorty goes in search of a more radical device of explaining away meaning as the legacy of the logocentric view of language. There is, according to him as according to Derrida,[20] only the text or the language with no meaning lying deeply hidden. The Derridean method of deconstuction shows that the text takes care of its signification without representing anything other than itself. The signification is packed into its own texture and therefore is as arbitrary as the text itself. This textualization of meaning shows that meaning is a historical phenomenon and that it emerges out of the text's involvement in time and history. The transcendental search for meaning as the *a priori* condition of language and thought has to be dispensed with.

Rorty's disapproval of the transcendental approach to the meaning question follows from his pragmatist conception of meaning and truth as utility-based concepts. He is one with his fellow postmodernists in denying that there are anything called truth and meaning in a semi-ontological sense.

4. Necessity of Language and Meaning

Now we can ask if Rorty's deconstruction of language, truth and meaning is right, that is, if there is no way back from the so-called death of meaning and truth. The moot question is: Is language not representational at all? If Rorty's argument is sound, it is almost impossible to project language as a representation of the world. But a little reflection shows that the linguistic representations can still be found relevant and intelligible. Language has its internal link with the reality which we shall discuss in the following sections. It has the logical property of being about the world. Therefore language has the inherent capacity to tell what is around us in the world. From this capacity arises the inherent notion of saying and meaning. This property of meaning is a necessary property in the sense that language falls apart without the capacity to mean.

Meaning is intrinsic to language in the sense that a meaningless use of signs is inconceivable. Meaningless signs are ruled out of language. Meaning therefore is the inner being of language, i.e. its essential form that makes the linguistic sign intelligible. It must not be conceived as external to language, nor must it need to be projected as accidental to the system of symbols. Rorty's argument that meaning is accidental and therefore deconstructible does not hold good, because meaning is a necessary feature of language and can never disappear unless language itself disappears.

Meaning follows from the representationality of language. A sentence, for example, says something about the world, be it factual or fictional. In its capacity to say something about the world, the sentence acquires meaning in that there is a definite content which it expresses. The sentences are endowed with representional contents which are manifest in the actual assertions of them. Thus meaning arises as co-terminus with the representational contents. The so-called use theory of meaning which Rorty employs to explain meaning does not deny that there are representational uses of language and that meaning has to be situated in the text and not outside it.

The textualization of meaning does not deny meaning rather reinforces it as meaning in now made more inherent than before. Meaning ceases to be a matter of verification or a matter of experience; it is now a matter of the language itself. Meaning is a matter of the grammatical status of the word or sentence in the language-game, as Wittgenstein[21] would put it. Rorty's textualization is a form of grammaticization and therefore meaning instead of being denied is reaffirmed. But is it at the cost of its representationality? This need not be so because the words and sentences which have a place in the grammar are not without the job of representing the world. If representing the world is an inalienable right of language, it must be the case that even from within the text[22] it must speak about the world. Texts are vociferous about the world even without going out of their logical limits. There is no going out of the bounds of language as Wittgenstein[23] and Davidson[24] have shown, even when it is the case that language speaks about the world. Representation takes place within the language or the text.

Rorty tends to argue that meaning is man-made and so is socially conferred. That is to say that it is an ethnological phenomenon being the result of a social consensus on how the language is used rather than how ideally it is structured with a set of representation rules. It is no doubt true that meaning has a human face and that it is rooted in the human use of language. But from this it does not follow that meaning is either contingent or dispensable. Being social and human does not mean being contingent. There is also necessity even in the human activities so far as they are rule-governed and thus normatively organized. This is what could be said in favour of the fact that meaning is a pervasive feature of the human activity called language-use.

There are thus necessary constraints on meaning insofar as it is a matter of determining the inner essence of language. Meaning is a matter of the logical form of language as form and meaning or sense necessarily go together. If meaning is detached from form, it can go external and thus become contingent. Without the necessary constraints, meaning might as well disappear as it is likely to happen in the Rortian framework of the contingent language-use.

There are metaphysical elements amongst those necessary constraints on meaning such as the meaning-grasping self, the world and above all the representational relations between language and the world. Meaning does not establish the language-world relationship: it reveals it. The self and the world are not the constituents of meanings: they are the *a priori* presuppositions. Thus the metaphysical grounds of meaning remain in the background to provide a stable foundation to meaning.

Rorty argues that meaning has no metaphysical or transcendental foundations as the logocentricists have always claimed. In his framework, meaning is as contingent as language itself and so can be explained only in terms of the human contributions to language-use. His emphasis is on the fact that meaning is not dependent on the world and that the contingency of meaning depends precisely on the fact that the world is totally absent from meaning-determination. Meaning thus becomes relative to a linguistic group, i.e., to an ethnic form of life. But what Rorty does not take note of is the fact that such relativized meaning is bound to be fragmented and thus to disappear in the contingency of linguistic irregularity and irrationality. The reason is: a fragmented meaning loses its moorings in the public space of linguistic organization in which the metaphysical constraints operate. The necessary structure of meaning brings in the transcendental grounds to avoid contingency.

Logocentrism in its semantical form can effectively check the menace of relativism. First of all, it can show that linguistic meaning does need a rule-centric framework in which certain grammactical rules are absolutely unavoidable. Secondly, it can show that the constraints of the reality are *a priori* built into the meaning-determinations. So meaning must incorporate an element of representation of the reality from within the linguistic web. It is not that meaning is an impersonal and ahistorical entity. But for that matter we cannot call it a product of an irregular history or of an irrational human contingency.

Meaning thus cannot be deconstructed in the Rortian sense. It cannot simply disappear. If meaning disappears, so does the sign and what the sign stands for.

5. Sign, Signification and Rules

The sign does not yield to the deconstructionist pressure precisely for the reason that it has a grammatical solidity of its own. It is organized, rule-governed and above all woven into a grammatical web. Therefore the sign is used according to norms determined by grammar. It signifies precisely in the manner already grammatically charted. Thus it cannot be held that language has no necessary structure and that it has no identity of its own. Besides, it is paradoxial to say that there is language-use but there is no language to be used.

Rorty has not done justice to the concept of language when he says that language-use is enough and that there are no necessary rules which language can display, it being a contingent human phenomenon. But he himself admits that there are languages even if there is no universal language. It is true that there is no universal language, though there can be a universal logic and a universal grammar.[25] Even then any language demands a structure and a necessary structure at that in order to be a well-formed symbol-system. This minimum logico-grammatical requirement is fulfilled by any language whatsoever.

Rorty's contingency argument suffers from this misconception that grammatical necessity is metaphysicl and ahistorical and so must be rejected. But we can always make a distinction between grammatical necessity and metaphysical necessity and can concede the former without conceding the latter. Rorty is against the latter as a pragmatist and a deconstructinist. But grammatical necessity should not be an anathema to any philosopher of language including the pragmatist.

We may concede to Rorty the idea that a particular historical language is contingent since it might not have existed except because of a historical accident. But from this can we infer that language as such is contingent and that human beings might not have any language at all? It is impossible to conceive of the human society without language because our conception of a human being is necessarily rooted in the conception a language-using being. Man is essentially a linguistic being in the sense that we cannot think of man except as he thinks and moves in language.[26] Thus we can say that though it is contingent that we speak a particular language, it is not contingent that we speak any language at all.

We cannot talk of contingency without presupposing necessity. Therefore if certain aspects of language are contingent, certain other aspects must be necessary. The idea of wholesale contingency is a misnomer. At least our world is linguistically structured insofar as we have to make it intelligible in our language. Any other world which might be supposed to be non-linguistic, however, could be made intelligible only in our language. Thus the linguistic world is the primary locus of intelligibility and interpretability. Therefore language is the basic source of intellegibility and cannot be dispensed with.

The distinction between linguistic and non-linguistic is necessary because without this distinction the very idea of language can disappear. If there is nothing called language at all, then there would be no distinction between a sign and a thing, between word and object. In that case the word will have no identity of its own and will merge into the object. So the whole idea of signification and meaning will simply collapse. Rorty cannot look forward to such an inevitability. He still retains the

idea that there is language so far as our practical life is concerned but beyond that there is a no *a priori* linguistic reality in the form of rules and structures, since we cannot rise above it to talk about rules, etc. Rorty writes :

> For there will be no way to rise above the language, culture, institutions, and practices one has adopted and view all these as on a par with all the others.[27]

This is to admit that there is language like culture but that there is no language in the *a priori* sense as having a transcendental structure. But as we have argued, to admit any language is to admit a necessary structure of grammer of the language concerned. The necessary structure of grammer is built into the language.

6. Truth and Representation

Now we shall come back to the question of the representational structure of language which is supposed to be Rorty's main point of attack on logocentrism. As already indicated, the idea of representation is itself not as reprehensible as Rorty thinks. It is believed that the idea of representation leads us back to the rationalist metaphysics of mind-world duality and the so-called subject-object and scheme-content distinctions. Besides, Rorty thinks the idea of truth and objectivity[28] are derived from *the notion of language as representation of the world.*

But the idea of representation can be rescued even if we have to *sacrifice the transcendental notions of truth and objectivity.* First of all, idea of representation is logically so basic that it cannot be made part of a theory of language. It is something very original to the conception of language that there is a harmony between language and reality.[29] This idea of language-world harmony is not best represented in the idea of "correspendence" or "fit". These notions are anyway as archaic as the notions of "play", "game", etc. The basic point is how language and the world meet and how they interpenetrate. Whether this is expressed in the language of *representations or in the language of vocabularies*, it is a matter of choice. But what is not a matter of choice is that language is about the world or language tells what the world is.

Rorty cannot brush aside the fact that our language is the only medium of *representing* the world though he has reason to reject the idea that there is only one true representation and that there are external criteria of deciding which is the the true represention.[30] Even if we admit *with Rorty* that all criteria of truth are internal to language and the conceptual scheme, it itself does not deny that there are criteria to decide such issues. Truth therefore matters even if internally, as Putnam[31] puts it so clearly.

The idea of humanizing truth and making it available in the human language is as old as James and Dewey and therefore there is a force behind this move as it is evidenced in the writings of the present day American thinkers including Rorty and Putnam. But this is not enough to disown truth altogether or to de-representationalize it as Rorty does. Truth basically is a representational concept in the sense that we have to bring in the language-world relationship to decide what is true and what is false. Truth pertains to the way language functions vis-a-vis the world and therefore there is no way we can detach the concept of truth from the concept of the sentence being about the world. In fact truth and being correctly about the world mean the same logically. Truth and being about a fact are not two different things. There is sameness of meaning to a sentence being true and its being about a fact. Such is the dynamics of the concept of truth that we cannot think of evaluating language without bringing in the concept of truth.[32]

Thus Rorty's attack on the representationalist concept of truth and language has not succeeded in making it disappear. Truth, meaning and language still draw our attention as most important concepts. It is another matter that there are alternative ways of looking at them, Rorty's deconstruction being one of them. But can Rorty claim that his is the only true way of understanding language and truth without committing self-inconsistency?[33]

NOTES

1. See Richard Rorty. *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey, 1979). Chapter VIII.
2. *Ibid*, pp. 389-94.
3. Cf. Wittgenstein. *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. trans. by D.F. Pears and B.F. McGuinness (Routledge and Kegan Paul. London. 1961). 5.512. 6.13.
4. Rorty. *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*. p.12.
5. See Rorty. *Objectivity, Relativism and Truth* (Philosophical Papers Vol. I). (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge. 1991). pp. 151-61.
6. Jacques Derrida. *Of Grammatology*. trans. by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (John Hopkins University Press. Baltimore and London. 1974). pp. 12-13.
7. *Ibid*, p.13.
8. See Rorty. *Contingency, Irony and Solidarity* (Cambridge University Press. Cambridge. 1989). Chapter 1.
9. Rorty. *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*. pp. 3-13.
10. See Rorty. *Contingency, Irony and Solidarity*. Chapters - 1-3.
11. Cf. Derrida. *Of Grammatology*. Part I. See also his *Writing and Difference*, trans. by Alan Bass (Routledge, London. 1978).
12. See Eve Tavor Bannett. *Structuralism and the Logic of Dissent* (Macmillan. London. 1989). Chapter 4. See also Rorty. *Consequences of Pragmatism* (The Harvester Press. Brighton. Sussex. 1982). Chapter 6.
13. Cf. Rorty. *Objectivity, Relativism and Truth*. Chapters I and II.
14. Rorty. *Contingency, Irony and Solidarity*, p. 22.

15. Rorty. *Objectivity. Relativism and Truth.* pp. 126-61.

16. *Ibid.*

17. See Micheal Dummett. *The Seas of Language* (Clarendon Press. Oxford. 1993). Chapter 5.6 and 8.

18. Hilary Putnam. *Realism and Reason* (Philosophical Papers Vol .3). (Cambridge University Press. Cambridge. 1983). Chapter 4.

19. See Frege. "On Sense and Reference" in *Translations from the Philosophical Writings of Gottlob Frege.* ed. by P.T. Geach and Max Black (Basil Blackwell. Oxford. 1952).

20. See Derrida. *Of Grammatology,* Chapter 2.

21. Cf. Wittgenstein. *Philosophical Grammar,* trans. by A. Kenny (Basil Blackwell. Oxford. 1974). sects. 27. 44. 84

22. The idea of the text being representational from within does not deny that the texts. including the scientific texts. do talk about the world. It is a truism that texts represent within their logical limits.

23. Cf. *Philosophical Grammar,* sect. 55: "The connection between "language and reality" is made by definitions of words. and these belong to grammar. so that language remains self-contained and autonomous".

24. Cf. Davidson. "On the Very Idea of a Conceptual Scheme" in *Inquiries into Truth and Interpretation* (Clarendon Press. Oxford. 1984). pp.183-98.

25. Cf. Noam Chomsky. *Rules and Representations* (Basil Blackwell. Oxford. 1980).

26. Davidson. "On the Very Idea of a Conceptual Scheme". p.185: "Languages we will not think of as separable from souls; speaking a language is not a trait a man can lose while retaining the power of thought".

27. Rorty. *Contingency, Irony and solidarity,* p. 50.

28. Rorty. *Objectivity, Relativism and Truth, pp. 126-61.*

29. Wittgenstein, *Zettel,* trans. by G.E.M. Anscombe (Basil Blackwell. Oxford. 1967). sect. 55: "Like everything metaphysical the harmony between thought and reality is to be found in the grammer of the language".

30. See Putnam. *Reason. Truth and History* (Cambridge University Press. 1981). Chapter 1 and 2 for conceding this point to the pragmatists and the antirepresentationalists.

31. *Ibid.*

32. *Ibid.* pp. 49-50. 55-56. See also his *Realism and Reason.* pp. 69-86.

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3

SOLIDARITY OR OBJECTIVITY? A NOTE ON RORTY'S AMBIVALENCE

AMITABHA DAS GUPTA

The notion of 'objectivity' occupies an important place in the recent philosophical debates started after postmodernism. Its stand on objectivity is a radicl departure from the traditional (or, should I say modern?) understanding of the notion. The traditional notion of objectivity is the result of a particular philosophical standpoint assumed in the traditional philosophy. It may be characterized as the absolutist standpoint which defines objectivity, truth, knowledge and many other important philisophical notions in a particular way. In this standpoint these notions are thus defined in absolute terms, without reference to human subject and the community to which he belongs. The outcome of it is that objectivity becomes the chief characteristic of truth and knowledge. In the eye of the postmodernist philosophers, this constitutes the logocentric nature of philosophy.

In the recent period this conception of philosophy has been questioned. It has been questioned from various quarters including that of analytic philosophy. In this respect the critique offered by postmodernism is the most seminal one. Postmodernism is a school of thought which has a composite culture expressing diversities within the framework of certain common assumptions. The notion of objectivity is one among such common assumptions.

In my paper, I have been mostly concerned with Richard Rorty's work on objectivity. His rejection of objectivity and the substitute that he offers in place of it, namely, solidarity is highly significant in the postmodernist debate on objectivity. In my paper, I have first given a brief account of Rorty's ethnocentric standpoint in philosophy and argued that in what sense Rorty's can be called a relativist. This discussion is

necessary because without it there cannot be any meaningful discussion on objectivity and solidarity. In the second section. I have discussed Rorty's notion of objectivity and solidarity and tried to offer a critique of his account. The central thrust of my critique is to show how Rorty's position involves ambivalence.

SECTION I

RELATIVISM AND THE ETHNOCENTRIC STAND POINT OF RORTY:

Rorty does not subscribe to relativism as traditionally understood. Instead, he talks of pragmatism. But while it is true that his ideas do not strictly fall under the category of traditional relativism, it will be wrong to deny the connection that his pragmatism has with relativism. In fact, Rorty espouses a sophisticated version of relativism and in that sense he is one of the foremost representatives of modern relativism. particularly in the context of the debate between realism and relativism. An important point that needs to be noted in the context of Rorty is that the issue of relativism comes as a consequence of his pragmatism. The ethnographic account of knowledge. reason. truth and objectivity makes a strong case for relativism, and it is the ethnocentric perspective that permeates his philosophy that becomes the ultimate ground of his relativism. I shall now briefly state the reasons for which Rorty may be called a relativist - this will also serve the purpose of stating the theoretical stand point of relativism.

Rorty as relativisit

To consider Rorty as a relativist one must mention. first the philosophical project that he pursues since it forms the background to his relativism. As well known, Rorty is against the foundationalistic nature of traditional philosophical inquiry which claims to make universally valid knowledge claims. This forms the negative part of his project, and consists in showing that :

First, there are no " perennial and eternal problems"[1]

Second, there cannot be any valid knowledge attained "by erecting a permanent neutral framework for inquiry and thus for all culture"[2]

Third, a neutral frameork engages in an impossible task because it attempts to provide "non historical conditions of any possible historical development"[3]

In Rorty's assessment. the main fallacy of traditional philosophy lies in its conception of knowledge. It is a conception that regards knowledge necessarily as 'knowledge of permanence and thereby assumes a total dichotomy between the knower and the known. In this situation. how the object is known is explained through the intervention of mind.

Mind, reflects the external world and it is through these reflections that it forms the various representations of the external world. These representations constitute knowledge. In this traditional world view, mind is placed at the centre - the foundation of philosophical inquiry. Later, the conception of mind as representing the external world is replaced by that of language as performing this task. As a result, instead of the mind, it is language that becomes the foundation of philosophical inquiry.

Rorty criticises this foundationalist view. His fundamental plea is that instead of looking for immutable foundations we should look into social practices - the concrete forms of life, in which much basic notions such as 'reason', 'truth, 'objectivity', 'knowledge, etc, are first originated. According to his call, you bring these notions back to earth and see how they are embodied in our social practice. This asks for a drastic change in our perception to philosophy.[4] Knowledge and justification are viewed as social phenomena. Knowledge consists in understanding the social practices through which we justify beliefs. Accordingly, an inquiry into the nature of knowledge becomes a matter of studying certain modes of action and interaction: Rorty characterizes this as conversation. Knowledge is thus regarded as a matter of conversation and so also is philosophy. Science, humanities, morality etc., are not exceptions to this. They should be defined as modes of conversations rather than as having fixed structures based on a foundation.

Rorty considers this conversational point of view to be a moral one. Edification of philosophy implies the possibility of conversation and as a result, philosophy does not degenerate into inquiry. Thus the social community, understandably enough, plays a crucial role in Rorty's philosophy: it works like a stage that makes all these activities possible. In view of this, it is no wonder that, for Rorty, the community becomes the ultimate source of moral and epistemic authority. This, indeed, expresses an ethnocentric world view based on two of Rorty's fundamental convictions - first, we cannot go outside of our paradigm or culture and, second, we cannot get a God's eye-view of things. In this world view, relativism comes as a logical consequence - a natural corollary to ethnocentricism.

At the background of Rorty's ethnocentricism, we may now try to find out the specific grounds on which he may be called a relativist. The first that comes in the list is the notion of justification - justification pertaining to knowledge and truth. According to Rorty, "knowledge is what we are justified in believing".[5] Knowledge is a case of justified belief. Then the crucial question is: how is justification to be defined? or, what does it consist of? Rorty's answer is that justification" is to be judged by the standards of our own day."[6] This remark makes it obvious that like the notion of knowledge the notion of truth for Rorty is intrinsically

connected to justification. There is nothing called attaining truth since truth does not have any independent status. Rorty thus equates truth with warranted assertability. Later, we find, that he further radicalizes his position and he considers knowledge and truth as commendatory terms. They are defined as compliments which people pay to their favourite *beliefs which do not require further justification.*[7] *as Rorty comments:*

> Knowledge is like truth, simply compliment paid to belief which we think so well justified that for the moment further justification is not needed.[8]

In this interpretation, knowledge and truth do not enjoy the same status of objectivity as it used to in traditional philosophy. They are based on the idea of consensus - the agreement among people. Putnam, while speaking about Rorty's relativism, points out that in Rorty's argument 'truth' and 'falsity' are reduced to mere marks indicating the people with whom we agree and those with whom we disagree. Rorty claims that the same consideration holds in contexts such as, when we make normative evaluations or judge what constitutes rationality. Normative evaluations are said to be trans-community evaluations but, in essence, they are disguised expressions of communal preferences. As a result, they are not universally binding. This is so because norms are not ahistorical--they are, on the other hand, historically defined. Normative authority is thus not transcultural but intracultural. Now, when we come to rationality, we find that the same communal considerations play in determining what constitutes rationality. The question about rationality and irrationality cannot be decided in absolute terms - the reason being that they are invariably relative to culture. As Rorty says

> ...there is nothing to be said about either truth or rationality apart from descriptions of the familiar procedures of justification which a given society - ours -- uses in one or another area of inquiry.[9]

Putnam responds[10] to the ideas expresseed in the above passage. As he points out, is not Rorty's use of the word 'ours' an endorsement of his radical relativism? As mentioned earlier. Rorty is not a self confessed relativist nor is he a relativist like Portagoras. The claim that Rorty is a relativist comes from his ethnocentricism. It may not be untrue if we say that the other side of his ethnocentricism is relativism. There is a serious flaw in Rorty's ethnocentricism turning into relativism. It's failure comes from its denial of a notion of truth which, according to him, is the unattainable will-o-the-wisp. This leads to the further denial which is the denial of objectivity. The alternatives that Rorty suggested, namely, converstaion and solidarity in place of truth and objectivity are as defective as the view that he rejected. As I shall argue, Rorty's view finally leads to a predicament which expresses the predicament of relativism in general. To do this I shall now examine the central idea of Rorty - objectivity and solidarity.

SECTION - II

SOLIDARITY OR OBJECTIVITY? A WRONG QUESTION

As discussed earlier, for Rorty, intellectual inquiry is not meant to be a search for truth. It is a conversation in which people participate and they participate according to the rules of conversation. It is through conversation that agreement is reached. Arriving at an agreement is thus the final goal of an inquiry. It is the expresion of truth. But, what is this agreement? What is it about? Rorty's positive answer is that it is an agreement on values - the values that we share among ourselves. It is the moral conception of the individual that becomes the guiding force behind this agreement. This is what Rorty calls 'solidarity'. As he says, "In the end, the pragmatist tells us what matters is our loyalty to other human beings clinging together in the dark, not our hope of getting things right."[11]. The two revealing ideas expressed here are. : first, his pessimism regarding the possibility of enlightenment, and second, the primacy of social loyalty over cognitive/rational values. This is the basis of his idea of solidarity as posed against objectivity. Reaching agreement in conversation is thus primarily the result of social loyalty - our desire for 'clinging together.' On the contrary, to see this as the expression of any objective truth will imply the refusal to see the socio-cultural basis of congnitive activities. But can objectivity be denied in favour of social loyalty? Can science proceed in this way? These are the questions which Rorty needs to answer in order to establish his thesis on solidarity.

Rorty wishes to reduce objectivity to solidarity and claims that this is what the pragmatists desire to do. A minor clarification may be sought here. A question may be raised. Is the proposed reduction a case of reduction at all? This question is raised because, for Rorty, there is no such thing as objectivity, and thus his claim is that the traditional or realist commitment to objectivity is a misplaced commitment. In view of this, his task is to supplant the commitment to objectivity by solidarity. What we perceive as objectivity is essentially a case of solidarity. Certainly, this process does not involve any reduction and therefore, it is wrong if it is described in this way. One may, of course, see this as a terminological problem and may thus consider the issue of reductionism not as seriously as it has been projected. It is true that reductionism is not an issue here. But it indicates certain deeper problems concerning Rorty's treatment of objectivitiy and solidarity. He has failed to give a satisfactory account of these two notions and, as a result, he has had to take an ambivalent stand on the reduction of objectivity to solidarity. The talk of reductionism thus indicates a deeper malady. It shows Rorty's unclarity over these two concepts. Let us go into Rorty's analysis of these concepts and see what is wrong with it.

The attempt to find out Rorty's analysis of objectivity and solidarity may be quite disappointing. The reason is that contrary to our expectation, we find that these two terms are not explicitly defined by Rorty. In fact, they are not even characterized independently. They are seen together and are, therefore, characterized in terms of one another.

Rorty writes that a person "seeking" solidarity will never try to justify the practices of his community in relation to something lying outside of that community. For him, the former does not bear any relationship with the latter. This standpoint reveals what may be called the internalist attitude where everything is seen and justified internally, that is, within the purview of the community. This may be called *the ethnocentric standpoint*. However, when we come to objectivity we find a drastic change in the person's attitide while seeking objectivity. To attain objectivity, he "distances" himself from his community and its persons. He does not consider himself to be a member of a group. This results in an impersonal attitude since in the absence of social bondage, the person seeking objectivity attaches himself to something which is nonsocial and nonhuman. Justification is sought externally and it thus reveals the absolutist standpoint. As we can see, in the ethnocentric standpoint there is nothing called objectivity - objectivity is really solidarity. To "reduce" the former to the latter the only consideration that plays, as Rorty points out,"...is what is good for us to believe,"[12] This is a pragmatic justification expressing ethnocentricism at the back ground.

It evidently follows from Rorty's account that there is a distinction between objectivity and solidarity. Before speaking about this distinction, we must note that this distinction has a far reaching methodological implication. Methodologically, this distinction corresponds to the distinction made between explanation and understanding[13] in the philosophy of social sciences. Rorty's discussion of objectivity and solidarity must be placed within the wider context of the methodological debate between explanation and understanding. This is important for the purpose of evaluating the validity of Rorty's claim – a claim which clearly assumes a methodological perspective.[14]

It is true that Rorty has made a distinction between objectivity and solidarity. But is the distinction between the two a bridgeable one? This is a question raised by Alexander Rosenberg, one of the critics of Rorty. Rorty's answer to this is of course affirmative, since, as we know, he allows the possibility of objectivity to be reduced to solidarity. But there is an anomaly here, which arises because if we grant the reduction of objectivity to solidarity to be a fact then the question of making any choice between objectivity and solidarity or between explanation and understanding does not arise. We have seen Rorty simultaneously holding both these possibilities. To show that

reductionism is a fact – a real possibility-Rorty needs to provide more arguments for his defence. This is particularly true of those who hold that the gulf between explanation and understanding is unbridgeable. Their main argument is that the two methods associated with the respective concepts (explanation and understanding) are incompatible. On this issue, we do not find many arguments from Rorty. In fact, contrary to his reductionistic stand, there are places where Rorty seems to be suggesting that the gulf between the two is unbridgeable. However, at the same time, Rorty puts forward his claim saying that the pragmatist should choose solidarity. This clearly shows the ambivalence in Rorty's stand. It becomes particularly apparent when we take the distinction between objectivity and solidarity in the context of the controversy between the two methods namely, explanation vs. understanding. This ambivalent attitide of Rorty affects his treatment of solidarity, which is one of the constitutive themes of his methodology.

We thus come to solidarity. Rorty expresses his desire that pragmatists should choose solidarity. But what does this solidarity mean in actual terms? The following passage from Rorty will help us to get an idea.

> Insofar as a person is seeking solidarity, he or she does not ask about the relation between the practices of a chosen community and something outside that community. Insofar as he seeks objectivity, he distances himself from the actual persons around him not by thinking of himself as a member of some other real or imaginary group, but rather by attaching himself to something which can be described without reference to any particular human beings.
>
> ...Those who wish to reduce objectivity to solidarity, call them pragmatists ...do not require either a metaphysic or an epistemology. They view truth as what is good for us to believe.[15]

This passage makes it obvious that seeking solidarity implies that you give primacy to community. Community comes first and it becomes the basis for moral and epistemological justification. Solidarity, so conceived, is essentially an ethnocentric notion.

Given this notion of solidarity, one will like to know how to achieve this solidarity and how to extend it to others. On this, Rorty's suggestion is that the first step towards achieving solidarity will be to give up the positivist philosophy of science, particularly, the universal application of its scientific method. It is necessary to do this – otherwise, social sciences will never be interpretive – interpreting people around us. By changing its method and goal, social sciences can thus generate the sense of community feeling among people. The consequence of all these is that social sciences will no longer be projected as part of natural sciences.

Instead they will be seen as "continuous with literature". A passage from Rorty's writing will help us to see the point that he is making. As Rorty says:

> If we get rid of the traditional notions of "objectivity" and "scientific method" we shall be able to see the social sciences as continuous with literature – as interpreting other people to us, and thus enlarging and deepening our sense of community. We shall see the anthropologists and historians as having made it possible for us – as educated, leisured, policy makers of the West – to see exotic specimens (sic) of humanity as also "one of us", the sociologists as having done the same for the poor (and various sorts of nearby outsiders, the psychologists having done the same for the eccentric and the insane.[16]

The above passage offers an alternative conception of social science –a conception that is certainly very humane. In this sense, the ideas expressed in this passage are imaginative and bold. All that is said by Rorty is true and no one can fail to appreciate the sensitivity expressed through this passage. However, like the other side of the coin, there is also the other side of the passage which indeed, is highly revealing : this reveals Rorty's ambivalence -- a conflict in his system of ideas. Let me explain this.

A careful analysis of the passage, as Rosenberg put it, reveals that Rorty is not against objectivity a such, nor is he against scientific method. In this formulaton, objectivity is not in conflict with solidarity because these two are not imcompatible with each other. If objectivity is not a problem then what is it that bothers Rorty? What is his reason for rejecting objectivity and scientific method? He is rejecting only the traditional picture associated with it. He is really against the positivistic picture of these notions. This, indeed, is a position which is contrary to his earlier position on objectivity where no room is left for the latter.

Rorty's position that there is no conflict between objectivity and solidarity, of course, presupposes a condition. In fact, without this the whole position will be untenable. It involves taking a new view on knowledge. As against the prevalent view that knowledge is representation, Rorty agues that knowledge is essentially a matter interpretation. To assume this perspective implies considering all inquiry to be a matter of interpretation. In such a picture, the various disciplines and their associated methods are seen as having a purpose to fulfill, namely to promote solidarity. The consequences of this is that objectivity is no longer seen as an independent notion having autonomy of its own. It, on the other hand, dissolves into or is reduced to solidarity. This is how one can see the connection between knowledge and solidarity.

As we can see, objectivity can be reduced to solidarity only when we assume that knowledge is interpretation. In Rorty's claim the former follows from the latter. From our point of view it is on this epistemological position that the issue concerning objectivity/solidarity stands. This is actually a shift from one position to the other. The reason is that our original problem - whether objectivity can be reduced to solidarity - is now shifted to whether knowledge can be seen as a matter of interpretation or not.

Coming to the thesis that knowledge is a matter of interpretation, the element that is crucial to it is the notion of meaning. The reason is that interpretation and meaning are inseparably related. Interpretation involves explication of meaning. In the present context, the explication involves meaning that "constitutes human existence." In Rorty's perception, the key to the understanding of everything in the world is meaning, because as he puts it, "everything is constituted by a web of meanings".[17] To explain this position two notions are to be clarified : First, the meaning of the word 'constitution,' and second, the meaning of the phrase 'a web of meaning.' The use of the expression'constitution' does not have any physical connotation. It should be distinguished from its physical sense, such as, when we say that the house is constituted of bricks. But 'constitution' may be understood in some other sense where to say that X constitutes Y implies that we cannot know Y without having sufficient knowledge about X. This shows that there is a network of relationships among things. Things are related to each other in a particular manner. Hence, to understand a particular thing one requires to see it in relation to many other things which together form what may be called a network of relationships due to which we interpret things in a particular manner. As Rorty[18] explains, something would be considered as fossils and not mere rocks only when we "grasp its relation with other fossils." Any inquiry is guided by certain interpretation which, in actual terms, is an interpretation of the meaning relationship that exists among the things or objects under consideration.[19]

The inseparable relation between meaning and interpretation raises a basic problem regarding the notion of meaning itself. We must accept as Rosenberg[20] argues, that there are two notions of meaning. In one case, meaning is identified with intention i.e., expressing intentional content. It may thus be called intentional meaning. At this, meaning is close to interpretation. Rorty's talk on meaning is solely conerned with the intentional notion of meaning. However, there is the other notion of meaning which may be characterised as natural meaning. The specific context in which it arises is the casual context. In the natural and social sciences, the meaning of an expression is often determined by the functional role that it plays in the casual network. To know the meaning is thus to identify the relevant cause-effect relationship.

In view of this causual perspective, there may be an exclusive sense in which the meaning of an expression may be used. To give an example from Rosenberg, the term 'meaning' may be used exclusively in a biological sense where the adaptive meaning of a trait may be understood in relation to it evolutionary significance. This is a notion of meaning which does not have any intentional content and thus it is not identified with intentionality. It is, on the other hand, identified with causality or its causal role, which is independent of any interpretation, such as Rorty's example of the paleontologist's interpretation of fossils. The reason behind it is that the paleontologist's interpretation does not ascribe causal roles to fossils. For a thing to be a fossil there must be certain relevant causes which, of course, exist prior to the paleontologist's recognizing it as a fossil. This is the idea of natural meaning.

In view of these two notions of meaning – natural and intentional, one can now see the predicament of Rorty. If everything is taken to be a matter of interpretation, the problem that will arise is regarding the very notion of meaning that Rorty holds. There are three alternatives left for him. First, meanings and causal roles are identical. Second, meanings are not natural. Third, meanings are of two kinds – natural and intentional. None of these alternatives will be acceptable to Rorty. He cannot accept the first since that will lead to the denial of his won position. He cannot accept the second since that will be the denial of the facts of language use. Finally, he cannot accept the third since that will amount to holding a different position. As the picture emerges, Rorty should either stick to his untenable position that knowledge is interpretation, or should accept any one of the alternatives which virtually implies the denial of his own position. This, indeed is a predicament.

Let us come back to the fate of objectivity. The dicussion on meaning shows that there still is a separate place for objectivity. Objectivity is not wholly a matter of interpretation alone so that the distinction between objectivity and solidarity can no longer be tenable. The causal perspective on meaning shows that there is also a nonreductionstic sense of objectivity where objectivity enjoys restricted autonomy. This is a position which inescapably follows from the fact that there is an objective domain of knowledge and truth.

Continuing with the idea of objectivity, my next argument will be to show that relativism contains within itself a transcendent nature. The transcendent nature of relativism refers to an ideality which is a constructed notion having an objective validity of its own. Rorty's notion of community which constitutes the core of relativist doctrine ironically exemplifies this nature. Let me explain this.

As pointed out earlier, the notion of community is central to the relativist world view since it is the notion on which the supreme authority lies. But what does it refer to ? what is its boundary? I mean how larger or small is this community?.[21] The implications of these questions can be seen by taking specific contexts into account. Such a context will show the specific sense in which the notion of a community is figured – in the context of a cognitive realm such as physical theories, the notion of a community of physicists. This is a context where the notion of a community has a restricted reference. However, the same is not true in the context of everyday conceptualizations where we find the presence of such commonly shared concepts like 'body', 'mind.' 'goodness.' 'truth.' etc. The notion of a community presumed here must have a vast range. A different situation arises when we come to morals. To decide on a moral issue, what is it on which we should depend -- the little community centered around my village? Or the wider community outside?

As we see, the common issue running through all these contexts is where to draw the temporal and geographical boundaries. The exercise of where to draw the boundary may appear to be a practical task. But in fact, it is not. The problem involved in this task is enormous and to resolve it is in principle impossible. The greatest danger to this view is that communication in any form will be impossible. Hence, to save the situation, we accept certain formats or structures which are the minimum required to carry out the communication or conversation in a society. This constitutes ideality - a construction that is made by us. The notion of a community thus constitutes an ideality which transcends the arbitrariness involed in drawing the different cultural boundaries. The ethnocentric diversities are admitted as the background of an ideal foundation that facilitates communication across the different cultural groups. This is similar to the Habermas - Apel idea of the ideally communicating society. The ideality we are talking about expresses a sense of objectivity which implies that the notion of community has an objective ideal correlate and it thus defies the relativest notion of community. The main problem with the relativist notion of community as found in Rorty's doctorine is that it creates an impasse which leads to a deadlock. They overlook the fact that the community has an objective-ideal correlate which makes conversation keep going.

NOTES

1. Rorty. R. *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (Princeton University Press. Princeton. New Jersey. 1979) Chapter VIII p.3.

2. *Ibid.* p.8.

3. *Ibid.* p.9.

4. *Ibid.* p. 141-142

5. *Ibid.* p.3.

6. *Ibid.* p.178

7. Rorty. R. *Consequences of Pragmatism. The Harvester Press. 1982. Introduction.*

8. Rorty. R. 'Solidarity or Objectivity?' *Objectivism, Relativism and Truth.* Cambridge University Press. 1991. p. 24.

9. *Ibid.* p.23.

10. Putnam. H. *Realism with a Human Face ed.* J. Conant. Harvard University Press Cambridge. 1990

11. Rorty. R. *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature.* p. 166.

12. Rorty. R. 'Solidarityor Objectivity?' p. 22.

13. Rortty. R. 'Method of Social Science and Social Hope'. *Consequences of Pragmatism.*

14. Rosenberg. A 'Superseding Explanation Versus Understanding : The View from Rorty'. *Social Research.* vol. 56. No.2. 1989.

15. Rorty. R. "Solidarity Or Objectivity?' p.21-22.

16. *Ibid.*

17. Rorty. R. 'Method of Social Science and Social Hope'. p. 199.

18. *Ibid.*

19. The idea of interpretive meaning has been clearly stated by Rorty in the following passage.

> ...when it is said that " interpretation begins from the postulate that the web of meaning constitutes human existence"11 this suggests that fossils (for example) might get constituted without a web of meanings. But once the relevant sense of "constitution" is distinguished from the physical sense (in which houses are constituted out of bricks) to claim that "X constitutes Y" reduces to the claim that you can't know anything about Y without knowing a lot about X.... But one could equally well say that fossils wouldn't be fossils, would be merely rocks, if we couldn't grasp their relations to lots of otehr fossils. Fossils reconstituted by aweb of relationships to other fossils and to the speech of paleontologists who describe such relationships....Anything is, for the purpose of being inquired into, "constituted" by a web of meanings.

See Rorty. 'Method of Social Science and Social Hope'. p.199.

20. Resenberg. A "Superseding Explanation Versus Understanding: The View from Rorty'.

21. Monanty. J. 'Rorty. Phenomenology and Transcendental Philosophy'. in his book *The Possibility of Transcendental Philosophy.* Martinus Nighoff Publishers. Dordrecht. 1985.

4

WHAT EXACTLY IS WRONG WITH 'WHAT IS WRONG WITH POSTMODERNISM?'[1]

A. KANTHAMANI

Christopher Norris is an author of more than five books.[2] He writes on exotic matters such as deconstruction, hermenetutics and post-modernism with a great deal of conviction and wants to vindicate a view according to which there is an analytical divide between deconstruction on the one hand, and hermeneutics and post-modernism on the other. That is to say that such an analytic divide suggests a contrast which carries far reaching implications for the interface between philosophy and literature. One chief implication is that while decontruction can very well sustain such an interface, post-modernism undermines it both within philosophy, by attacking it as a universal theory of reason as well as within literature, by attacking the theory of literary criticism. Hermeneutics counters deconstructionist leveling of the genre distinction by offering transcendental hopes of a metanarrative.[3] Both of the above views are questionably wrong according to his view, for they cannot facilitate the above interface. Now, the analytical divide is that while deconstruction has the conceptual resources of analytical motif, post-modernism lacks them. This is very much due to another divide that exists between theory and practice which post-modernists advocate, and consequently, set their heart on political practice to the exclusion of theory, while deconstruction, at least in a depoliticised version, has an escape route from political practice. In a sense, deconstruction has distanced from a generalized post-modernist in their attitude towards theory.[4] This lends credence to the idea that deconstruction also belongs to the same range of discourse which Habermas terms as the philosophical discourse of modernity.[5]

A discourse on modernity, on Habermas's view, becomes philosophical the moment when it recovers communicative reason

(philisophy is the custodian of reason) in the incompleted project of modernity that is. in post-modernity.[6] In my opinion. a paradigm such as this has the prospect of reaching a convergence between the post-analytical, post-modern and post-functional at least in the sense of these words that are currently operating in the literature on ' resistance', as it is applicable respectively to the three domains of linguistic reference, naturalistic theory, and mind.[7] A discourse on modernity becomes philosophical. on Norris's view, if it can be sufficient to restore the place of logical argumentation to literary criticism by allowing it to mimic philosophy of language. Deconstruction is. therefore. not a bad or naive philosophy, as alleged by many critics, but a species of analytical contestation of text of philosophers (e.g. Husserl) with a modicum of analytical rigour, and so, it has no reason to keep a distance from the major Anglo American analytical traditions.[8] So any view which does not allow this to happen must be countered with gusto. Richard Rorty is one who resists this, since for him. language cannot become yet another transcendental paradigm, and his enterprise turned out to be merely counter-analytical and narrativist in its tenour.[9] So also. one can agree that any vulgarization of deconstructive logic as found among literary writers or philosophers must be confronted with a sense of urgency.[10] The dictum which holds that philosophy is a species of *literary* activity *must be* confronted by saying that literary activity is nothing but a species of philosophyzing in the analytical mode. Nevertheless, it is doubtful whether sophisitication in the realm of deconstruction can analyticlly complete the project of erstwhile philosophies of language, in exactly the way as he claims to be. May be, the difference between Habermas and Norris consists in the former's alleged adherence to a meta-narrative. and the latter's acceptance of the linkage between theory and practice. But Norris should demonstrate that the project of deconstruction gets analytically completed. if he wants to carry conviction among analytical philosophers. Unlike Karl-Otto Apel. who may be understood to demonstrate that there is an analytic completion for hermenutics. post-modernism and deconstruction. Norris is nowhere near to this and he can hope so. if only he has completed the postmodern project in the way Habermas does.[11] This does not mean in the least that Norris's writings fail to tread upon territories which are practically inaccessible even to thinkers who have a knack for philosophy-literature interface.

His latest thesis is that deconstruction. especically the French variety. inaugurated by Jacques Derrida. has its own unique logic and hence it is defensible while post-modernism as practiced by Lyotard as well as the philosophical discourse on modernity in which Habermas proposes to complete modernity in postmodernity are not. for there

is something basically wrong both in their respective adherence to counter theory in any or all forms and the acceptance of theory in the universalist form.[12] What gives us the initial shock is the question as to how these two incompatible motifs become the simultaneous targets of Norris's critique. To begin with, deconstruction is poised to contest or deconstruct the Kantian presumption of autonomy of faculties of pure reason, as reflected in the tripartite distinction between the cognitive, ethical, and the aesthetic on the one hand, and again targets the valorizing of the one as a model over the others, especially the aesthetics over the others. On the other hand, it also finds their commensurability in the way it makes aesthetics as playing a mediating role in the way Kant has done in his *Conflict of Faculties*.[13] Thus it becomes poised to celebrate the above interface. No doubt, postmodernism also wants to differ from it by privileging the aesthetical, but at the same time, it ends up with creating a rift between different phrase regimes. As Norris tells us, there are two sides to the post-modernist stance against metanarratives.[14] On the one side, they set their hearts against any conflation between them, by proscribing any extrapolation between one regime (the cognitive) to the other (the aesthetic), and secondly, they are also equally against accepting a revisionist reading of this as privileging aesthetics, which is supposed to povide a model for political practice. The aesthetizing of political emerges as the inimitable source and model for all forms of aesthetic ideology with the consequent potential for an inverted Platonism.[15] Such an inverted Platonism inaugurates a dangerous vision of society with its anti-realism or scepticism or irrationalism and it is thought that deconstruction has the true potency for a realistic counter and it is, therefore, the best candidate for sponsoring an *ideologiekritik*. Calling this as yet another transcendental illusion, Norris suggests that the most appropriate tool in this context is provided by deconstruction: we must deconstruct the Aesthetic ideology, as it was demonstrated in the theorization and practice by Paul de Man within the precincts of literary criticism.[16] This tantamounts to showing that the function of literary criticism still depends on textual close reading. In brief, whereas deconstruction mediates theory and practice, post-modernism divides their unity. One can safely attribute the analytical motif to the former, but not .o the latter. That is, deconstruction extends the Kantian theme of the condition of possibility of each of the above three faculties in the direction of marking out the conditions of imposibility as the further, much less understood, limits of the Kantianised critique, here being the critique of literal or aesthetic discourse, and thus, it is well motive to follow a close Kantian reading of Kant. The Kantian beginnings of deconstructuions amply attested to by holding that deconstruction starts off where Kant leaves off.[17] It seems to be clear that by

virtue of the acceptance of the above analytical divide. Norris cannot agree to the thesis which shows that the stuff that make deconstruction as well as post-modernism are both offshoots of the analytical traditions in philosophy. Norris has no patience for any such argumentation which could possibly show that they are rooted in analytic traditions. If so, he can hardly convince any analytic philosopher about the soundness of his enterprise by simply showing that deconstruction is tolerably arguable and hence it can fall within the analytical mode of discourse while post-modernism falls without. Conversely, the above interface can be sustained to stay, Norris thinks, and only when it becomes fine-grained enough to withstand the onslaughts both from post-modernists as well as from contra-postmodernists (hermeneuticists) like Habermas. The deconstructive contesting can, therefore, be defended for its analytical rigour against the attacks leveled against both by post-modernists and hermeneuticists alike.

I propose to examine some of his major stances and show that there is something basically wrong since it hardly allows analytic philosophers to accept any thesis about the interface with any comprehension, and consequently, the thesis about the contest of faculties goes wrong at least on one major count namely that it sorely ignores the real or *de facto* contestability about the contest of faculties that have been mapped and portrayed both by hermeneuticists as well as post-modernists.[18] If they are shown to execute this without depending on deconstructing the text, then so much the worse for the contradistinction Norris posits at the beginning. On the other hand, if it is shown that their analytical credentials are no less important, then also so much the worse for the so-called analytical divide. On both grounds, Norris' thesis can hardly take off the ground. Further, granting that the Kantian arguments for deconstructions are shown to be flawed, one must still post the analytical rigour as important. Habermas' ideal of communicative reason is poised to dedifferentiate the three value spheres within the parameters of his philosophical discourse of modernity within the analytical mode of consensus (dissensus) theory of truth, while Lyotard obtains a unity of philosophy by a close reading of the analytic of the sublime via the analytic of indeterminacy.[19] On the other hand, Lyotard's attitude to dedifferentiation is not complete without understanding his near-total exploration into the two aspects of reflection in the Kantian notion of subjectivity.[20] This is the direction he takes in his latest reflections on the analytic and dialectic of the sublime and taste. We can safely assume that for both of these endeavours, analytic philosophy of language is to serve as a metanarrative. Hence, it is more appropriate to think of

them as offshoots of philosophy of language. Norris' understanding goes by default since he has no intention to coach post-modernism in the analytical idiom, whereas the analytical idiom in which deconstruction is couched is not sufficient to warrant acceptance. The point I am driving home here is that text, postmodernists and hermeneuticists can be understood to go further in proposing an analytic solution. And hence, they cannot be characterized as countertheoretical because they are counteranalytical which in no way sacrifices the analytical mode. A very similar point can also be made about Rorty, and if so, this can be used to question the way Norris aligns Fish with Rorty, whereas both use different mode of argumentation, though they are directed to the same neo-pragmatic end.[21] What I am saying in the above upshot is that no amount of Derridean credentials would go to prove antithetical to the above varieties of extreme theorizations (one accepting matanarratives and the other rejecting it), for the very reason that their genealogical roots remain the same. The genealogy lies in the analytical mode of language which each one pursues to its advantage. The failure to perceive this leads Norris to face the following dilemma: on the one hand, Norris cannot show that they are to be genealogically differentiated; on the other hand, he cannot show that they are analytically cohesive.

Fundamentally, Norris has no obvious answer to the query made by analytical philosophers: how shall we take the apparent lead of illogicality of these two strains unless it is shown that there is a specific lineage between the analytical mode and the analytical offshoots? This is what he cannot show because his endeavours stop at the claim that there is a certain logic informed by the current analysis, which the deconstructivists reading of text and the analytical traditions share: this is, both point to the failure of the referential theories of meaning.[22] True. such a failure of nerve is termed as post-analytical and *a fortiori*, there is a close connection between post-analytical mode and the deconstructivists denial of the referential mode. no less sanctified by the denial of the distinction between normal and deviant cases of utterances.[23] If anything it is the latter that provides a *plank* for deconstructing the texts of the speech act philosophy of language *a la* Searle.[24] What this eventually shows is that the analytic concerns of Derrida have the unique potential to critique current philosophies of language and jump into the other major mainstream varieties. For Norris. Habermas's theory of ideal speech situation has ancestry in Searle's speech act philosophy of language. wherein he has a recourse to a distinction between normal (serious) and deviant (non-serious) and hence. he too is likely to succumb to the denial of interface between philosophy and literature. If so, he too deserves the same treatment like the one he meted out to Habermas. Norris uses this

as one of the major bones of contention, and the same is made explicit by saying that one cannot make any rough-any-ready distinction between them. Indeed, this provides a nucleas for the entire argumentation, which is aimed to show that there is something wrong with post-modernism. Searle goes wrong, on Norris' view for the simple reason that he cannot better Austin's earlier account of speech acts which does not seriously believe to divide it into typecast categories, so long as they are rejected in favour of a different classification of speech acts into locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary speech acts. So, for Austin, it is presumed that there is a two term relation of ordinary activity of criticism and just as there is, for Derrida, a two flow relation between language and literary criticism. Apart from Derrida's ironic close reading of Searle, this goes against Habermas who cannot recognise such a two term relation; nor could he give allowance to stylistic differences of ordinary language.[25] Nevertheless, what Norris misses is that the continuity lies in certain specific concern of language, and this is what gets exemplified in the above dichotomy or the refusal to adopt this dichotomy. No doubt, Norris demonstrates with aplomb that analytical philosophers too are hallowed in their lack of semantic credibility as much as their deconstructive counterparts, and *a fortiori* both of them are to be located in the same boat. This is nothing but a transcendental *tu quoque* with which he castigates Habermas.[26] Much of this is found expression in the critique of Davidson's theory of truth and meaning.[27] Norris takes the view that what undergirds Davidson's philosophy of language is an echo of Sausserian linguistics which assumes that language is an interplay of structural relationships. Undoubtedly, Davidson needs a Derridean counter. Further, the inability to do referential semantics may bind both in an irrevocable union. Nevertheless, one must be told there is something analytical besides being logical and this is what is not shown by Norris' critique. However, it would be too hazardous to think that there is something that binds them together so as to prop up the above interface without which it will not have any legitimate claim, and that must be shown rather than assumed.

The main argumentative stance that Norris uses for the defence of deconstructive analysis is that the theoretical claims of deconstruction are its claims of logical rigour. The logic behind official deconstruction as it is presented by Derrida can be formulated in the following seven injunctions.[28]

1. Make an appropriate choice of text (literary text is a proxy);
2. Bracket the text for a close-reading;
3. Read a sub-text in its margin;
4. Show that the margin is central to the text;

5. Therefore, margin is not to be taken as a deviant text.;

6. There is a coalescence of text and the subtext almost to the point of identity;

7. Deconstruction is an activity that is based on identity of non-identity (or identity in difference), as the classical example shows as obtaining between difference and *differénce).*

Norris foists a Kantian motif to the above saying that while deconstructing is detextualising, it is textualising in yet another sense. This facilitates the drawing of the following conclusion which holds that there is nothing outside the text and the subtext. Norris cannot agree with this populous rendition of deconstruction. Consequently, on his reading, Derrida must be understood to explore not only the conditions of the possibility of a text but also the conditions of the impossibility of the text.[29] Following Rudolf Gasche, he fits this into a Kantian picture of Derrida which elevates philosophy over rhetoric as reflected in the undifferentiating character of a generalized rhetoric.[30] This is what is warranted by the above Kantian picture which mixes the possibility and impossibility into one single strain. So, Derrida's project, on Norris' understanding, has a singular merit in the way it incorporates an undifferentiated character of normal and deviant uses of language in contradistinction to Searle which valorizes truth values of utterances. Still one can believe that credentials of deconstructions are as much real as Searle's or for any one else's for that matter. Nevertheless, Norris refuses to address himself to the question as to whether this trait itself is enough to bring Derrida closer to their counterparts.

If it is shown that this may be so, then Norris' failure to do justice to his deconstructionist grue becomes more than apparent. This is what seems to strike me as his double failure. If non-seriousness of speech acts is to be equivocated with literary activities, then, it can be argued, that both Habermas as well as Lyotard have devised constructs that make room for this by recognizing deviant character of speech acts in their respective theorizations.[31] The finer point of detail is that they still continue to be engaged in their relation without giving up philosophy of language on the one hand, and without eulogizing the rationale of literary activities. Habermas's position is brought out in his own words: though he defends the possibility of demarcating normal speech from derivatives forms, he wants to take exception in saying that he has 'not shown how fictional discourse can be separated from the normal (every day) use of language'.[32] The relation lies more on a subtle level, in the exact sense that they all family-resemble to a certain extent, and beyond which they differentiate, but still they never lose sight of the relation. This is the reason why there arose many different paradigms within literary theory (e.g. reader-response

theory). Similarly, Lyotard draws attention to the pagan urge to violate the rules of language and incorporates this as a component within the rule following speech acts within a grandiose scheme of what he calls the post-modern agonal character of language use.[33] Lyotard's further use of this in his 'justice by paralogy' (after Kantian paralogism) and his continuing efforts to fit this into his analytic concern of sublime and taste embody an analytical character.[34] *Doing* justice to parties does not necessarily mean that their inherent opposition is thrown to the winds. *It is a paradigm of differentiation and* dedifferentiation and to what extent this provides a unique analytical paradigm is a question that is worth probing into.

I have called attention to this phenomenon of 'neither rule-following nor rule-violation' as an important combinatorial paradigm within philosophy of language and aligned it to Kripke's agnostic interpretation of later Wittgenstein's account of rule following.[35] A combinatorial paradigm such as this has not been recognised by any interpreters except Stuart Shanker in another context, namely the context of Wittgenstein's philosophy of mathematics.[36] Shanker recognizes that the *satzsystem* - following and *satzsystem*-violation is requiring more than one system of proof (e.g. impossibility proofs can be proved in yet another system), thus resulting in the halving of the combinatorial paradigm.[37] I have made an attempt to study the above paradigm taking the cue from Crispin Wright who uses a procedure of agnosticating the agnostic view within a novel reconstruction of Kripke's *reductio* which therefore, starts with the above agnostic position of 'neither rule-following nor rule-violation'.[38] Assuming the symbiosis of serious-non-serious speech acts with the above combinatorial paradigm, by virtue of their binary traits, one can hazard a guess by saying that while *the splitting of the combnination does* not augur well for a view (I shall identify this with a *die Logik* view *a la* Wittgenstein.[39] *which assumes that every unique symbolism has a* certain metaphysical import) such as the one pursued by post-deconstructionists (e.g. Paul de Man), it cannot show that a Derridean deconstruction can trespass a *difference* between writing and *reading*.[40] *Put simply, this comes to saying that between the two* theoretical frames of reading and writing, there is a differentiation *and dedifferentiation*. Both stand in a certain relation to ordinary language. Seen from this angle, the mistake in the interpretation of Derridean deconstruction is that it valorizes the theory (of reading) and recovers its impossibility in writing. If so, then its proper place is lower than that of post-deconstructionists like de Man who bend upon a variety of differentiation to be discussed below, whereas Habermas' is on a higher scale of gradation. I shall pursue this point below.

Surprisingly, however. Norris puts the *agon* to a different purpose in which he tries unsuccessfully to relate to aesthetic ideology.[41] *Agon*, according to this reading signifies the rivalry between *aletheia* and *mimesis*, and in the context of ideology, it conveys the idea of a mimetic rivalry which Heidegger sought to introduce in his vision about the ancient Greeks. It takes a new turn in Norris' interpretation with what he calls the settlement of account to the earlier ethical commitment with Nazism. Norris wants to put deconstruction to a distinct political use in which acceptance and rejection become the flipsides of the same coin. This is exactly the sense of contesting Norris uses. In other words, Norris uses contest as a political equivalent of deconstruction. This is the reason why he terms as the escape route that deconstruction has from untoward to awkward political implications. I have a tendency to believe that the Nazi adherence and disowning has an symbiotic analogue more to the above combinatorial paradigm. Our differences lie here. Now, the onus is on Norris to demonstrate that it is appropriated within such a suitable analytic deconstructive model. I think that he cannot undertake this task. I claim to have moved in this direction. Since he does not show this, I am forced to think that his concerns with deconstruction is an analytical failure. Nevertheless, he may defend his position by arguing that it is only for this Norris has recourse to de Man's dialectic of deconstruction. In fact he uses it as a major plank to draw out many different senses of aesthetic ideology which actually results in a tissue of confusion. I shall assess its full significance towards the end of the essay after first considering his comments on Lacou-Labarthe's gloss on Heidegger's factual commitment[42] and metanarrativist settlement of accounts by hypostatizing national aesthetics and second, by focusing on the flaws in his interpretation of de Man's post-war writings in Belgium, in which the commitment is shown to be settled within a narrativist account of the linguistic predicament. Norris' defence of factive or realistic reading of this episode leads him into many traps. Let me first review the argument that is supposed to be common to Fish and Rorty below.

On Norris' understanding, postmodernists like Richard Rorty and Stanley Fish are anti-theoretical in that they cannot seriously believe that theory issues in practice. There are at least three sense in which they are against theory. First, theory in the sense of a universal set of principle (metanarrative sense); secondly, theory in the sense of scientific paradigm (Kantian sense), and thirdly, theory in the sense of a consequentialist enterprise (the transcendentalist part of theory).[43] Against Rorty, Norris argues that he cannot make philosophy as a species of writing.[44] He counters it by saying that there is reasoned argument in literature especially reflected in the way literary criticism is practised currently. Rorty shares a common platform of anti-realism with

Stanley Fish's equally vibrant neo-pragmatist plea for practice.[45] Both deconstruct theory from this point of view. Norris examines the steps of Fish's non-consequentialist *reductio* of theory as found in the following argument: the premises of Fish's *reductio* is formulated as follows: [46]

1. We have theory and therefore it issues in practical consequences: we have no theory. and therefore. we have no consequences for practice;
2. The pragmatic clause: what difference it makes or what practice it engenders;
3. The neo-pragmatic clause: literary activity is neopragmatic in the exact sense that we have continuity in our beliefs.
4. The philosophy Gettier-type of anti-epistemic clause : Our beliefs need not necessarily be related to absolute claims (Gettier-type of counterexamples shows that we have certified true belief but it is not knowledge: we have no knowledge of our knowledge):
5. Literary activity has no Cinderella status and as such both theory and non-theory have no status; they do not issue in any consequences; they are inconsequential or a better way of putting it is that they make no difference:
6. The assumption (1) is deducible to absurdity for we have belief which does not require any theoretical backing;
7. The lack of theory is non-consequential;
8. Therefore. theory cannot give any guidance:
9. The acceptance of abyss clause: there is a cleavage between theory and practice:
10. Therefore. practice must go on. irrespective of theory or no theory.

Norris is obliged to show that his argument to prove the flaw in postmodernism can ill-afford to become consistent with the above. But given his stance for realism. this is what it becomes. For what he calls attention to in the above is that both resistance to theory and the resistance to resistance to theory are inconsequential. His argument for realism will be proved fatal once if it is shown that Norris' own resistance of theory is equally inconsequential. So he cannot hold fast to an astute defence of realism from the point of view of scientific theory *a la* Roy Bhaskar without seriously believing that it is also inconsequential.[47] Conversely. he cannot use his realistic commitments to demonstrate that resistance to theory is inconsequential. This leaves him absolutely with no choice but to accept that both realism as well as anti-realism.[48] Will he able to assert that both realism as well as anti-realism are inconsequential? He can say that anti-realism is inconsequential. but he can never say that realism is inconsequential. Nor could he theorize saying that

both are consequential. Like Fish, he can only ask whether it makes any difference to prove that there is a fatal flaw in postmodernism. His best bet is naturalism which however he chooses not to follow. knowing that it cannot. then his arguments against postmodernism cannot succeed. We can indeed hold that in neither of these three senses, one can go against theory. But it does not mean that in either of these three in the manner in which Habermas does in accepting ideal speech situation that can effectively counter distorted speech communication. Nor can anyone totally reject a metanarrative in the way Lyotard recommends. Norris finds a middle way and this middle way suggests that there is a linkage between theory and practice. This is what gets reflected in political theory and practice. One cannot privilege political theory of Marxism as a metanarrative without being conscious of what is happening around the world. Many Marxist intellectuals go astray by privileging aesthetics in its stead and think that the practice of aesthetics will change people's life.[49] But this is yet another form of *idelogiekritik* which cannot be sustained. This is indeed the lesson to be drawn from Paul de Man's version of self-deconstruction. which has ample evidence to show that this is yet another form of false consciousness. Norris criticizes Baudrillard for making such a wholesale version of aesthetic ideology.[50]

On Norris' understanding, it is not that Lyotard refuses to recognise the link but he places the analytic of sublime as providing a link. The flaw about this view is that it makes the linkage as issuing in a passage to heterogeneity.[51] The passage to heterogeneity, as Lyotard understands it, is due to what he calls the aesthetic time. The notion of aesthetic time replaces the notion of subjectivity, or at least makes it paradoxial. And, because of its unconditioned character, it also causes indeterminacy. Unfortunately. Norris has no occasion to consider Lyotard's later reflections on the analytic and dialectic of the sublime.[52] What lies on the analytic side is the paradox of subjectivity which denies the possibility of an aesthetic subject with temporality and what lies on the dialectic side is the recovery of the subjectivity that is allowed by the same property. In my understanding, such a position warrants an epistemic stand-point in which the externality and the internality of the reflexive subject are seen in cohesion with one another. Put in the language of philosophy that is familiar to the Indian traditions, this means that the self is non-dual. Two consequent points are worth reflecting on. On the one hand, the analytic is divided into two of its major reflexive functions which Lyotard calls as the tautegorical (I have my mental states) and the heuristic (which seeks the methodical unification through the discovery of *a priori)* of Kant's transcendental psychology. a term Lyotard introduces to capture the identity within a multiplicity of dissimilarities.[53] That is to convey the idea the

paradoxicality of the sublime is resolved in the notion of taste. The elaborate way in which it gets resolved thus requires us to read the tautegorical function as having a postfunctionalistic character in which it cannot identify self as such except through external means in which the subjective (reflexive) heuristics also plays a methodical role. As Lyotard conceives it, the dialectic is a transcendental process rather than a natural one and it is this which prevents the natural dialectic of reason from misleading us, without being able to eliminate it. Lyotard takes them to be the real principles after Kant which incite us to tear down all these boundary fences. It is this which brings the projects pursued by Lyotard and Habermas into close proximity with one another. For both, the critique of subjectivity and the critique of philosophy feed on one another. It may be noted that Habermas also not only endorses the rejection of *principia individuationis* and proposes a consensus dissensus model of communicative reason which lies close to the above paradigm, but also it makes it a model for all the three interneshing spheres.[54] The reason why I subscribe to this and lay emphasis in this context is just to bring out the post-functionalistic preoccupation of Habermas' reasoning. I am aware that this goes against most of the other functionalistic readings of Habermas. Ignorance on these nuances, however difficult they may be, is likely to exact a heavy price on our understanding of Lyotard's real position. This is what is seen in his stopping short to understand Lyotard's 'incredulity of metanarratives' as no more than providing a counter-theoretical leverage. It is counter-theoretical because it cannot grant determinate stage of history as pre-reflected upon by a theory. On Norris' understanding, Lyotard's efforts lie in producing a heterodox reading of Kant which enjoins not that we distinguish between triple sphere of reason, but the thin line of linkage should not pre-empt a conflation between them. No doubt Lyotard reads Kant's analytic of sublime as supervening sensible, but we cannot bring it under an enlightened consciousness.[55] It helps us only to distinguish the sublime from beautiful which is consensus based. Consequently, he thinks that the political reading of Kantian sublime would only drive a wedge between political theory and political practice as disparate phrase regimes which cannot be reconciled. A more appropriate reading would suggest that the relation between the sublime and the beautiful sponsor a unity without falling into a Kantian post-modernism which forges the unity by counterbalancing the incredulity to mentanarratives by accepting a small narrative, and thereby dedifferenting their differences in the Kantian way.[56] In sharp contrast to this, Norris claims that Derrida provides reasoned argument in his account of deconstruction and proves himself to be as not against any form of theory. The strength of the above conclusion squarely depends on the analytical credential of

Derrida's textual strategies. It is not so much that Norris intends to prove the analytical credentials of Derrida beyond doubt. Norris has weakened the above thesis so as to show that he shares certain similarities with analytical involvement with semantics in much the same way as it is understood by the post-analytical philosopher of language. I think that Norris intends to attach a meaning to this particular label as revealed in his latest essay.[57] There are ample evidences to show that the analytic involvement with semantic functions of language are not straightforward as he seems to think and hence they all lie closer to heart to the Derridean deconstruction. This is demonstrably true in the case of theorists like Donald Davidson who indulge in the realistic construals of the semantics for a natural language.[58]

It is clear from the foregoing that Norris' word 'contest' renders it ambiguous by overlooking two of the recurrent phrases that occur in Lyotard's writings, namely the 'agonistics of language' and the phrases in dispute' both of which have unlimited potentials for a Kantian reconstruction.[59] But Norris' use of it is a double-think. Its fundamental sense is the deconstructive contesting of the text. It is used first in the deconstructive sense in which it contests the metanarrative (universal) character of theory, whereas it has also to be understood in the positive sense in which it contests the metanarrative character of one regime over others so as to prove their credentials for a linkage. No doubt, Paul de Man provides an exemplar for Norris in this second context. Briefly Norris' use of it needs a thorough overhaul. But Norris is aporetic in the way in which he uses factive evidences for an interpretation which is least convincing and hence it mars the otherwise consistence treatment of the theme. The aforesaid linkage is one that obtains between theory and practce. As Norris thematizes, it provides a linkage between Paul de Man's involvement of Nazi military regime and later disowning of it. This is equally true of Heidegger.[60] Paul de Man's resistance comes, so to say. not from any extraneous source. but from within and against. Thus Norris appropriates Paul de Man's dialectic of self-deconstruction, with little realizing that it conveys a different sense of deconstruction. albeit a stronger one. than the one he projects in his booklength study about him.[61]

The stronger sense is brought out by the acceptance of the universal impossibility of all theory. Since his theory. obviously a metanarrative one. and it cannot be excluded by it. it is both self-referential and paradoxial. It is curiously post-deconstructional in the exact sense in which it does not admit that (when we read a text). we deconstruct a text: but it says that when the text is read. the texts deconstruct themselves: that is they resist our reading of it. It is only because of this resistance. we know how to foreground the figural into the logical. This is what that leads him further on towards what he

terms as an epistemology of tropes but we know them by the manner in which they resist our reading. *Contra* Derrida, reading cannot be theorized, and captured by means of a reductive programme, but reading itself is theoretical. The Derridean logic of deconstruction couched in the above in sentences (1) to (7) is not totally agreeable to post-deconstructional logic, since they all presuppose a metanarrative about reading.[62] Paul de Man is immune to this aporetic consequence. What underlies this piece of curious logic is the following set:

1. We read the text;
2. The text resists our reading;
3. The language of the text resists our reading of it;
4. So, language should become our first *episteme;*
5. Such an *episteme* demands that we read because language resists it;
6. Both the materiality of reading and the reading resist it;
7. The materiality of reading devolves into the text
8. The literariness of the text resists it, resists because it sponsors a dialectical (in the Kantian sense) movement;
9. Such a dialectical movement self-deconstructs the text;
10. The dialectic foregrounds the figural ruses;
11. Such a foregrounding inaugurates an epistemology of tropes;

It may be noticed that the queer turn of logic provides the linkage between the different phrase regimes much in the same way that Lyotard thinks it possible, especially in later analysis of the analytic and dialectic of the sublime. The term 'aesthetic ideology' is loaded with a strange meaning, in the context of Norris' discussion of different strands of deconstruction. On the one hand, Norris wants it to be understood to mean the false consciousness of *aesthesis* as an *episteme*. Further, the *ideologiekritik* is supposed to unmask the ideological aberrations. It is my contention that the analogy between aesthetic ideology and political ideology may not be as straightforward as Norris seems to think, if my foregoing formulation of the argument is acceptable. Since there is no figure of unmasking here, the whole figure might be suspect. Norris stretches further pushing it first in the direction of theory considered as a metanarrative, and secondly, in the direction of language considered again as a metanarrative. On the first view, resistance to theory must become analogous to resistance to ideology, meaning thereby reistance to the resistance of theory can possibly rescue to the ground level. On the second view, the *resistance to ideology* is actually resistance to language. Norris is clearly wrong to resuscitate his old favourite thesis here: the resistance to resistance to the linguistic predicament which is understood to problematize the relation between grammer and rhetoric on the one hand, and constatives and performatives on the other, must restore the phenomenal character of meaning in a realistic manner. The

phenomenal character of meaning as far his argument goes. is recovered once the underlying confusion between phenomenal cognition and meaning is shown to be the direct consequence of ideology which conflates the Kantian spheres of *episteme* and *aesthesis*. What is termed as the confusion between the linguistic and natural reality or between the function of reference with phenomenalism needs to be unmasked. On Norris' view, language cannot become hypostatized and hence it cannot become a metanarrative. Heidegger succumbed to this ideology when he hypostatized poetic language as the national *aesthesis* of the German Volks and thereby became vulnerable for adopting the most extreme form inverted Platonism.[63] In sharp contrast, de Man had an insight into the ideology and this is expressed in his opposition to Heidegger's appropriation of hermeneutics as forestructures of understanding. A renewal of reason and philosophy, on a de Man's view, requires a return to philology in which resistance to language is overcome.[64] Norris is right to counterbalance the 'blindness' to ideology with an 'insight' into its moral fibres, but at the same time, what Norris failed to understand in the above is the very dialectic between these two as reflected in the dialectic between the phenomenal and the ethical. He stopped short of saying that the language of ethics is the language of resistance since it can never be modelled on the phenomenal. This much de Man also agreed but at the same time, he has gone further. For de Man, *aesthesis* has the prospect of becoming and *episteme,* just as *episteme* itself becomes a vortex of materiality of the phenomenal object. The analogy here is between the way materiality resists phenomenality and the way *aesthesis* resists our entry into the text. De Man foregoes one model namely that Kantian one and replaces it with another one which captures the ruses of the phenomenal. It may incidentally be noted that de Man goes further than Derrida to lend credence to the phenomenal, understood in the above way. Norris, on the other hand, pursues a view, according to which the commitment and settlement of Nazi belief needs stretching of the Kantian conditions of the possibility into the conditions of the impossibility so as to fulfill the need of contesting or deconstructing the text.[65] Such a move commits to a fallacy of equivocation of Derridean and de Manian versions of deconstruction whereas they portend different stances as foreclosed in the above. Nevertheless, the model is Kantian in its core, but differs from it in foregrounding the negative aspects.

What political implications one can draw from this? While this is being so, Habermas' dedifferentiation of triple spheres or what he calls 'unmetaphorical intermeshing' may not altogether be different from de Man's in that the genre distinction between philosophy and literary criticism is denied only to the extent of recognizing their family resemblance, but when they acquire a distant mode of argumentation, the

distinction is restored. The reasoning is similar to de Man's in that still the paradigm is provided by epistemic argumentation, but this is not in *episteme* but it is in *asethesis* and this is how they intermesh. This is distorted again to the maximum so as to create the following ruse: his is only amounting to a qualified version of Kant and hence it should be dismissed.[66] Norris has justification, after all. to maintain such a position so long as Habermas does not provide any *a priori* conditions of possibility for different kinds of reasoning.

Against this qualified Kantianism, Norris attemps to provide a *de facto* Kantianism.[67] Derrida is a Kantian in the exact sense, according to this claim, that he has an extended version of transcendental agrument that pushes the conditions of possibility in the directions of conditions of impossibility. What stands in support of this is the presumption that *aesthesis* is an *episteme*, which undoubtedly valorizes textuality or strategies of textuality. An illustration of the *modus operandi* would be stated in the following set:[68]

1. Saussurean Text : Speech is the condition of possibility of writing;

2. Subtext : Speech is not the condition of possibility of writing;

3. Speech is the condition of impossibility of writing;

4. Textual Depth Reading: Writing is the condition of possibility of writing.

Similarly,

1. Husserlian text: There is a firm distinction between expressive and indicative function of language;

2. Subtext : No such conditions of intentionality:

3. It is impossible to have such a distinction;

4. Textual Depth Reading : We must allow constatives and performatives interplay (within one and the same text).

In both cases, the backdrop is provided by Sausserian linguistics which is poised to prove the following dictum: The language. understood as an economy of difference, is really an economy of *difference*. For Norris, this is a positive conclusion to reach in Derridean logic. The bane here is that the subtect overtakes the text and this is shown to be Derridean. Impelled by the zeal to show something positive. textuality is read as textuality: *mutatis mutandis*, subtextuality is subtextuality. What is ultimately brings out in the first set is the relation between two theories, namely theories of reading and writing as applied to one and the same text. The cost is too high since this also forces us to take Kant too literally. The presumption that *aesthesis* is *episteme* is a direct outcome

of this. Postdeconstructionists bettered it to the extent that they work within one and the same text (I have compared it Wittgenstein's *die Logik;* a better formulation holds that language as a universal medium).[69] It is not strictly Kantian as the former. What it fails to show is that there is Kantian model behind it which is what is shown both by Habermas as well as Lyotard, who agree to take ordinary language itself as the ultimate metalanguage.[70] Both can agree to a postfunctionalistic stance. The solution does not therefore lie in a Kantian postmodernism or Kantian deconstructionism but really in postmodernising or deconstructing Kant. Norris failed to apply his own tool to his analytic treatment of deconstruction. The prerequisite for this is that one must complete the project of analytical philosophy itself (this is what Karl-Otto Apel does in his project), a project which eschews the ambiguity of the above combinatorial paradigm, so as to obtain a covergence between the post-analytical, postmodern, and the postfunctional.[71] The reason for this is that each of this will lend the more or less the same dialectical strength to its respective matrix as demonstrated in the above essay.

NOTES

1. This is the winding-up essay of Part III of my project on the Major Analytic Traditions titled as the 'Hermeneutic Turn' and was originally written as a review of the most recent book of Christopher Norris, which is a near-thorough exploration into the thematic ralation between hermeneutics, deconstruction and post-modernism. It is titled, 'What is Wrong with Post-Modernism?' (WWPM, hereafter) and subtitled as *Critical Theory and the End of Philosophy* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1990). It is purported to examine the nuances of Norris' near-coherent reconstruction to date which includes his past reflections found in various books, in all of which the 'postmodernist pragmatist malaise, provides the bete noire: see f.n. 2 below.

2. Beginning with the *Deconstructive Turn: Essays on the Rhetoric of Philosophy*, Norris is continuously engaged in such themes: see especially *The Contest of Faculties: Philosophy and Theory After Deconstruction* (London : Mathuen, 1985) (COF, hereafter). Derrida (Fontana, 1986) (D hereafter) and Paul de Man: *Deconstruction and the Critique of Aesthetic Ideology* (London : Routledge, 1988) (DCAI, hereafter).

3. R. Rorty 'colonized' philosophy by subjecting it to literature. Habermas' critique decolonizes it by segregating if from literature and making it autonomous. Both are vulnerable from my point of view. See Chapter of Jurgen Habermas', *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity* (PDM, hereafter), trans. Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge : Polity Press, 1987).

4. Norris remarks: 'Deconstruction has distanced his own thinking from a genralised postmodernism: WWPM, p.50. Paul de Man, *Resistance to Theory* (RT, hereafter) (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986).

5. Norris identifies deconstruction as another philosophical discourse of modernity, but with a contrast. The contrast is while deconstruction recovers its 'analytic' herementeutics apostrophizes a metanarative of communicative reason.

6. Habermas takes modernity as an incompleted project. see PDM.

7. Aporia of reference. theory. and mind respectively leads to the postanalytical. postmodern and the post-functional.

8. Norris' main thesis is to analyticize and to semanticize deconstruction and to look upon postmodernism and critical theory as it archrivals. Norris eulogizes Derrida for his analytical rigour. It is. therefore. necessary to know its underlying logic.

9. I have worked out this in my 'R. Rorty's Counter-Analytical Narrative' (Ms.) which forms the penultimate essay in my Hermeneutic Turn.

10. Norris is against the application of deconstruction to literary criticism. calling it as vulgarization. His early works thematize it very much. I am in agreement with his critique of American understanding of hermeneutics, as practised especially by Amercian neocriticism. but for a different reason: my essay on R. Bernstein "The Agon and the Dialectic' (Ms.) is purported to criticize the alleged approachment of the Anglo-American and the Continental.

11. I prefer to call Karl-Otto Apel's completion as the second semiotic turn: my essay on Hans Gadamer. J. Habermas and K-O. Apel brings out this fully along with a rapproachment of the binary trait. embodied in the combinatorial paradigm.

12. Norris takes the opposition to be as one between deconstruction and hermeneutics and while the former is against a metanarrative. the latter is not. This is what I call the analytical divide: WWPM.

13. I. Kant. Conflict of Faculties: see the references given under Lyotard.

14. Norris describes the two sides in WWPM.

15. inverted WWPM.

16. Norris interprets Paul de Man's advocacy of textual close reading in this way.

17. Following Rudolph Gasche. *The Tain of the Mirror: Derrida and the Philosophy of Reflection* (Cambridge. Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1986). Norris also provides a rich diet of Kantian Postmodernism (the term is borrowed from David Ingram).

18. What I call de facto contestability stems from the binary or combinatorial trait mentioned in the text.

19. Lyotard 'Reflections in Kant's Aesthetics' (RKA. hereafter) in Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal 16 (2) 1993. pp. 375-411.

20. What is shown here is that Lyotard's analysis of Kantian subjectivity has an affinity more with Habermas because it strikes a congenial chord with the rejection of principle of individuality (a rejection of cartesian subjectivity. which is shared by many contemporary movements).

21. Stanley Fish and R. Rorty. WWPM. (Chapter 2).

22. Norris brings out the coherence of the failure of the analytical theory of reference with deconstructionist reading.

23. Norris is wrong to grant deconstructionists' denial of the distinction of normal and deviant utterances.

24. The divide between Austin's theory of speech acts and that of Searle's. on Norris' view lies in the former's exclusion of deviant utterances. whereas they are parasitical on them: see. p.63 of WWPM.

25. stylistic differences.

26. Tu quoque reads: 'you too have it'.

27. Norris' essay on Davidson in COF.

28. I try to capture the logic behind deconstruction in this set.

29. The Kantian underpinnings is discussed in p. 53.

30. Gasche. TOM.

31. The 'pagan urge to violate the rule' that leads on towards the multiplicity of language games is elaborately treated in my 'F. Lyotard's Post-Modern Agonism' (Ms.)

32. quoted from Habermas PDM.

33. The agonal nature of language is in central focus in his *Au Juste (Just Gaming)* 1979.

34. *Ibid.*

35. Saul Kripke's Wittgenstein on Private Language and Private Rules: I owe to Crispin Wright's formulation.

36. Stuart Shanker. *Wittgenstein and the Turning Point in the Philosophy of Mathematics* (Croom Helm. 1987).

37. *Ibid.*

38. My survey on Wittgenstein is found in 'Wittgenstein's Challenge to the Rule-as-Rails Platonism in Philosophy of Psychology' (Ms.)

39. Wittgenstein 's TLP.

40. No one can argue that reading and writing does not carry binary implications.

41. Norris has a different version of agon.

42. Chapter on Labarthe in WWPM.

43. For the three senses. see WWPM.

44. COF.

45. Chapter on Fish in WWPM.

46. The reductio is formulated by me: see Chapter on Fish in WWPM.

47. Norris criticizes Roy Bhasker. Bhasker, *Scientific Realism and Human Emancipation* (London : Verso. 1986).

48. I have shown that Norris has to accept both Realism and Anti-realism.

49. This is what is called the 'aesthetizing the political': it is comparable to the eleventh thesis of Feuerbach.

50. p. 24.

51. passage to heterogeneity.

52. RKA.

53. RKA.

54. Habermas.

55. *Ibid.*

56. *Kantian Postmodernism.*

57. Norris. 'Post-Analytical Philosophy: What is in a Name?' in the *Cogito* (1995). pp. 216-223.

58. COF.

59. F. Lyotard. Le Differend: Phrases in Dispute (trans. Georges van den Abbeele) Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press (1988).

60. See Chapter in PDM

61. It is not clear how far Norris is correct in maintaining that all types of deconstruction are modelled on Paul de Man's idea of self-deconstruction. I differ from him in maintaining that this is not true. There is a difference between deconstruction per se which requires us to read the text in a particular way. and de Man's idea is treat the text as causing such a close reading.

62. For the reasons mentioned in f.n. 61 above. I shall call de Man as a post-deconstructionist.

63. inverted Platonism.

64. DeMan's account makes use of philology.

65. see f.n. above.

66. p. 57.

67 The de facto contestability.

69. The idea of language as a universal medium underlies early Wittgenstein.

68. Norris. D.

70. Habermas terms this idea.

71. Contra Norris. I endorse a theme of convergence. I think. this is a sound reason for disagreement.

5

POSTMODERNISM AND CRITICAL THEORY

Implications For Third World Societies

FELIX WILFRED

Postmodernism and critical theory have been the most influential and at the same time vehemently controverted cultural forces in the West. Notwithstanding their abstruseness, labyrinthine thought-processes and obfuscations of theory, they have managed to draw even popular attention. This is because of their pervasive influence in various areas of life - from fashion, art and architecture to philosophy, literature and discourse on emancipation.[1] Though the issues these two currents of thought deal with are very much Western in origin, they have, nevertheless, expanded as themes of global discussion. It appears to me that little effort has been made to reflect on what they could possibly mean for the peoples of the Third World. One may wish to simply write them off as expressions of European narcissism in an age of instability; insecurity and growing anomie. That would be a serious failure to acknowledge their growing influence beyond the Occidental frontiers. However remote from our Third World concerns these currents of thought may appear, nevertheless, in a world that is becoming increasingly interdependent at all levels, we in the Third World cannot simply afford to bury our heads in the sand, like the proverbial ostrich, and pretend that they do not exist.

The purpose of this essay, then - to state straightaway - is to take note of some of the salient features and contours (not to speak in terms of nature and essence) of postmodernism and critical theory, and view them in their possible implications for Third World societies. Obviously, there are serious divergences between these two currents of thought. The following reflections will attempt to enter into critical dialogue with them, taking into account their internal differences.

I. DOMESTICATION OF ENLIGHTENMENT OR OBSEQUIES?

Who could ever seriously doubt about the crucial role Enlightenment has played in moulding the Western history at every level? Kant, the doyen of modern Western philosophy, in a programmatic book entitled "What is Enlightenment?" spelt out the nature and spirit of this historical phenomenon which was viewed at the same time as a task and mission the humanity had to pursue.[2]

The interpretation of Enlightenment and its significance marks an important difference between postmodernity and critical theory. Both of them are in agreement on the need of a critique of Enlightenment specially in its consequences as we live them today. But it is the nature of that critique which makes all the difference, and has been one of the serious points of contention between these two influential contemporary Western currents of thought. Suffice to recall the bitter mutual critique of Habermas representing critical theory, and Lyotard, Foucault, Baudrillard, Rorty, Derrida, the spokespersons of postmodernism and deconstruction.[3] Whereas the postmodern critique is radical with a cynical tone, critical theory in its contemporary version believes that all is not lost. It is of the conviction that one may not, in spite of all its failings and inadequacies, give up the heritage of the Enlightenment. The Enlightenment may be a house on fire, but there are so many precious treasures in it, that they need to be saved at all cost. Postmodernity in Habermasian sense would be a continuation of a modernity which has yet to reach its maturity and goal:

> One might epitomise Habermas' entire intellectual project and his fundamental stance as writing a *new* Dialectic of Enlightenment - one which does full justice to the dark side of the Enlightenment legacy, explains its causes but nevertheless redeems and justifies the hope of freedom, justice and happiness which still stubbornly speaks to us. The project of modernity, the hope of Enlightenment thinkers is not a bitter illusion, not a native ideology that turns into violence and terror but a practical task which has not yet been realised and which can still orient and guide our action.[4]

Seen from a historical point of view, the parting of ways between modernity and postmodernity is precisely at this point. Critical theory believes that the concerns of postmodernity could be accommodated within a re-interpreted and domesticated modernity, and therefore there is no caesura, or break between the two. On the other hand, postmodernism rejects such a stand, and is of the view that there is a break and discontinuity between the two. Even more, modernity is something whose obsequies postmodernism believes it is performing.

Postmodernism is quite justified in challenging the modern Euro-centric defenders of Enlightenment, including critical theorists, who believe it to be the Archimedean point from which to move the entire world. The critique and assessment of Enlightenment may be an inner-European discussion and is not certainly conducted with the Third World in mind. The Third World societies cannot, however, remain impervious to this discussion. For, it is they who have been the victims of a process which the Enlightenment set in motion; they were the ones who bore some of its worst political and cultural consequences. In fact, it was the Enlightenment that boosted the *self* of the Europeans and led to their dominance of the world. Seen from the perspective of the Third World, Enlightenment was the beginning of the political hegemony, world-wide exploitation and cultural imperialism.[5] Blatant contradictions are writ large on the Enlightenment and its progeny, the modernity: It meant freedom for a small portion of humanity, but bitter slavery for many other peoples: it was light for a few, and darkness for the many.

Against this backdrop, it is interesting to note that postmodern critique of Enlightenment is directed to one of its central articles of faith: the belief in the constitution of an *autonomous self,* the subject, the consciousness. The subject, insulated from the external realities, became the centre and linchpin of a new metaphysics. Postmodernism has challenged not only the traditional metaphysics with its approach in terms of being, foundations, stability, absolute truth claims, etc., but has called into question as well the new Enlightenment metaphysics centred on the subject.[6] Whatever was thought to have been built on rock-like foundation by the classical philosophy and by the Enlightenment, postmodernism. has made it all collapse like a pack of cards. The Nietzschean heritage of postmodernism is perhaps nowhere so evident as in this challenge of metaphysics and the declaration of its end. Together with metaphysics, the prevailing conceptions of truth are also exploded. Truth, the inner sanctuary of metaphysics, is converted into a mere illusion. In the words of Nietzsche the truth we seem to express through language is but

> a mobile army of metaphors, metonyms an anthropomorphisms - in short, a sum of human relations which have been enhanced, transposed, and embellished poetically and rhetorically, and which after long use seem firm, canonical, and obligatory to a people: *truths are illusions about which one has forgotten that this is what they are.*[7]

The Enlightenment has built up and cultivated the autonomous subject as the originator of everything to the extent that Hegel could declare that. what was ideal was real. The self was not only the fountain of knowledge and truth, but of freedom as well. What postmodernism has done is to deflate and deconstruct the self underlying the project of modernity. It is not

as if the self, the consciousness, or subject is constituted first in itself and then it seeks to relate itself to external realities such as culture, history, politics, etc., as its sphere of action.[8] Postmodernism has made us aware that which we call subject or self or consciousness is nothing but a tapestry woven by the fibres drawn from the cultural, social, political and historical realities with which we live and interact. Apart from these, the subject has no existence.[9] Summarising the view of Foucault in this regard, Christopher Norris notes.

> Subjectivity is constructed through and through by the various discourses, conventions or regulative codes that alone provide a means of "aesthetic" self-fashioning in the absence of any normative standards. For, on this account the subject is indeed nothing more than a localised point of intersection, a product of the various contending forces that define its very conditions of possibility.[10]

Thus, by deconstructing the self, what postmodernism has achieved is to strike at the very root of idealism on which many philosophical mansions have been built all along. Positively, the exploding of the insulated self, has led to the sudden irruption of the "other" or "alterity" within the Western cultural world. This is a significant development against the background of the history of hegemony during four centuries of colonialism, or what K.M. Panikkar has named as "Vasco da Gama epoch". It was the epoch in which the "other" never figured in the cultural and political horizon of the West.[11] There was no real "discovering" of other peoples and continents, but as the Argentinean philosopher Enrique Dussel has expressed, only a "covering up" of the "other" - peoples, races and exiling them from the arena of history.[12]

This postmodern thought has brought about a cultural crisis in the West and is driving it to go in search of the "other", whom it has sought to suppress. If taken earnestly, this crisis can become a new foundation for a refreshing dialogue with the very people, races and nations of the Third World who have been the victims. In fact, the West is today in a quandary as how to integrate in its polity the multi-cultural and multi-religious groups on the increase through migration in a globalising world. It has not developed any theoretical framework of interpretation for such a pluralist society. To move in this direction, I think, it is necessary to go beyond a critique of the subject. The crass individualism of the self needs to be countered by a strong sense of community and solidarity. This will be a very important antidote to the Enlightenment and modernity. The opening to the "other" and to "alterity" needs to be built up in this direction of community and solidarity.[13] Any such development cannot but be greeted by Third World societies.

I think, postmodernism has some salutary lessons for some of our Asian pundits who are wont to centre all philosophy on the self, the subject, the consciousness. For these pundits, other human realities have to only reverently circumambulate the pontificating consciousness. Any such belief in a self-illuminating consciousness as the depository of all truth cannot escape being called illusory, if it is devoid of the historical and empirical realities. Curiously, it is then the consciousness which would become *maya* and not the world. If such a thing is not to happen, then, the only way is to allow the consciousness to be flooded by the reality in which it is to find its identity. The alphabets of this reality are made up of social, political, economic, historical and cultural forces. Far too long consciousness has been the sacred precincts of philosophy and it was guarded against any impure admixture with the messy realities of our social existence. With this new approach of postmodernism, no philosophy can be pursued without encountering other human sciences.[14]

II. FROM GODDESS TO DEMON: THE FATE OF REASON

At the heart of the Enlightenment project lies the role of reason in human life. Hence it is understandable that the debate on the significance of the Enlightenment has centred around reason. Since modernity is nothing but a process of rationalisation of life, the critique of rationality is directed against modernity as well. Of course, there is nothing new about the critique of rationality and modernity. As a matter of fact, the most incisive critique came from such critical theorists like W. Adorno, Hockheimer, Marcuse and others representing the early phase of critical theory. Such a critique of rationality was prompted not by theoretical considerations alone, but by the haunting memories of Holocaust and fascism. The disturbing question was how could ever a tradition of rationality end up in such barbarism as witnessed in Nazi killings and in World War II. The clouding of reason by passion was recognised as a sad fact of life, and no one worked out the deep psychic forces and structures involved in that process, as Freud did.

Conscious of such realities, the second generation of critical theorists have undertaken the task of domesticating the brute and wild rationality which has acquired the dubious distinction of being an aggressor. We need to think only what it has done to nature, to environment, to gender and to indigenous peoples. Critique on what Heidegger called "*das rechnende Denken*" (the calculative or technological reason) and what Max Weber called "*Zweckrationalitaet*" (instrumental rationality), has been quite loud and clear. Critical theorists have no hesitation to join this chorus.

The project of postmodernism is not content with such window-dressing, or rehabilitation of reason after some catharsis. Its critique

is radical to the extent of dethroning reason from the goddess it has been to the state of a malevolent demon. The death-knell of metaphysics is also at the same time the eclipse of reason from the human horizon. Consequently, postmodernism acquires a certain anti-human streak in as much as it opposes any definition of the human nature and its essence in terms of rationality. And this is what characterised the anthropology of Enlightenment and modernity.

In view of all this, the second phase of critical theory, whose foremost representative is Habermas, has tried to develop a different conception of rationality. As defenders of the Enlightenment tradition, for critical theorists, there is no question of giving up rationality - one of its cornerstones. What a thinker like Habermas does is to set in circulation a recycled conception of reason, which, while remaining basically wedded to the Enlightenment project,[15] nevertheless could come to grips with the cultural, social and political exigencies of contemporary times.[16] The discursive reason is now to take the place of an abstract conception of rationality. To speak in spatial terms, it is no more the vertical reason, but a horizontal reason. Reason and rationality have to do with the process through which we engage in and through language in a community of conversation. Rationality is what is churned out from a process of discourse in a community, and not something that is a priori determined. It results through a process of understanding in which agreement and consensus-building occupy important place. Habermas has gone into detailed explanation of this process and the conditions for its possibility. It is not my purpose here to go into it.[17]

From such a conception of rationality, there has come about also a new brand of ethics - the discourse ethics. Ethics has been thought as the realm where reason is in operation - the practical reason or as Aristotle called *"phronesis"*. Habermas has the merit of bringing down reason from the heights on which it was set by the Enlightenment to the realities of our everyday interaction. He has transmuted it into an inter-subjective reality with social and ethical consequences. Though Habermasian thought on discourse ethics is couched in a theoretical language, in practical terms, we cannot fail to notice similarities, in certain respects, with the Gandhian thought of consensus-building and non-violent cooperation.[18] In this sense, the critical theory has insights and potentials for a creative reconstruction of society also in the Third World societies. Closely connected with it is the similarity between the importance attached to public sphere and civil society. In an age where democracy has been eroded and engineered by economic forces and by the power of media, it is important to activate the civil society and create a space for formation of public opinion. The concern of critical theory in this respect seems to go along with Gandhi who had foreseen the importance of civil society and public sphere.

But if we dig a little deeper into discourse ethics, the avatar of practical reason, then, we tumble into many difficulties. The community of consensus and agreement with communicative competence, which Habermas is projecting, presupposes that all our inter-subjective communications end in success. That is to ignore the serious conflictual situation in which many of the societies in the Third World are caught, with no solution in sight in terms of consensus and agreement.

But the most serious question about this type of discourse ethics is its *assumption that in a community all the members involved in* communication are *equal.* This blatantly contradicts the experiences in Third World societies. Where is the room for a community of communication between the dalits and the upper-caste, between the blacks and the white when, in practice, the dalits and the blacks are not counted as equals? In other words, discourse ethics does not take into account the ethnic and racial component which is one of the chief problems in the Third World societies. With the race and ethnic factor in mind, the Chicano philosopher Michael Candelaria notes,

> What has kept the Chicano out of positions of power and *prestige has historically and socially to do with the issue* of communicative competence. Chicanos were not considered to be competent to enter into speech acts that determine public policy because of their ethnicity... So, though speakers achieve communicative competence it does not mean that they are fully accepted into the communication community as long as racist patterns persist.[19]

What the Third World would require is not so much a discourse ethics as liberation ethics which would take seriously into account the conflictual nature of our societies.[20]

Postmodernism does not speak of ethics neither in the classical sense, nor in the sense developed by critical theory. This is among other things, due to the anti-rationalism evinced by postmodernism. The ethics of "ascetic priest" - renunciation, *tapas*, etc. - may conceal the will to power and control. Therefore, for postmodernists that can be no model for ethics. Given the anti-universal stance, postmodernists would not accept also any ethics based on norms derived from a common human nature. One may, nevertheless, ask the question whether there is an alternative to ethics. I think, even the language of alternative may not fit in with the postmodern concerns. At the most we can speak of a functional equivalent to ethics: It is the aesthetic self-construction of oneself, or in the expression of Foucault *"le Souci de soi"* (care of oneself). Foucault finds this as the ordinary ethical orientation in the West, before the advent of Stoic, Christian and other forms of ethics which have developed more and more along rational and normative lines.[21]

Neither the critical theory nor postmodernity has the capacity to offer much in terms of ethics. It appears to me that in societies with growing number of victims of oppression and discrimination. the privilege of saying what is right and wrong should be reserved to the victims. The *dukha* of the victims has a great cathartic role in de-ideologising. even more than any theoretical enterprise which postmodernism or critical theory might offer. When. on the other hand. the oppressors themselves are given in addition to their physical powers of coercion also the moral advantage of defining what is right and what is wrong. then. the subjugation of the marginalized becomes complete. Any development of ethics (or its equivalent) - whether that of critical theory or of postmodernity - when it brackets the victims, it will be simply a myopic ethic which cannot deliver.[22]

III. DECONSTRUCTION OF TOTALITIES AND THE IRRUPTION OF PLURALISM : DISCOURSE OF EMANCIPATIONS

In the postmodern perspective. the deconstruction of totalities with the recognition of pluralism is the point from which the discourse of emancipations takes off. By speaking of "emancipations" in plural. we have underlined another characteristic of postmodernity. which. as in other areas so also in this case. does not rely on any one particular project of emancipation.

The first step in emancipation is to bring crumbling down those constructs of reason and tradition which were believed to supply a comprehensive and total explanation of reality. and consequently determine our approach to them. They could be the dialectics of the spirit, the myth of progress. the ideology of Marxism. or any religion that claims to supply a total vision of reality. These presumed comprehensive systems of explanations with the claim of universal validity are what Lyotard calls *"grands recits"* - the great narratives or metanarratives.[23] The genesis and maintenance of modernity is solidly based on such narratives. One need to only think of the influence of the myth of progress which has been the driving force for the project of modernity.[24]

With the dismantling of great narratives. postmodernism brings in a new sense of fluidity and relationality. Postmodernity is. in practice. a transgression of borders - between text and interpretation. between philosophy and literature. culture and religion. and so on. The rationalist tendency of Enlightenment to differentiate. mark. classify and categorise - a process which often meant violence on reality as the history of colonialism and orientalism exemplify - has been challenged by postmodernity. It believes not in dichotomy and differentiation but

in de-differentiation *(Entdifferenzierung)*.[25] Implicit in it is also the critique of traditional logic of excluded middle: either...or.

The deconstruction of metanarratives and the consequent dismantling of borders, inaugurates the type of emancipations postmodernism envisages. For, these grand narratives with their rigid borders and categories, have been very much associated with power. In fact they have played a hegemonic role at all levels - political, social, cultural religious, and so on. As monolithic ideologies, they imposed themselves and *reduced the reality to its dimensions. The scepticism vis a vis* metanarratives, when extended to texts and literary sphere, takes the form of denial of any transcendental signified that would go beyond the signifiers, or any unitary structure which would confer meaning on the text.[26] The Enlightenment is the primary symbol of metanarratives. As such the critique *of postmodernity extends also to those metanarratives of emancipation* connected with it. Marxism is one such "great narrative" of emancipation, originating in the Enlightenment. Little wonder, then, that Marxism too has been the target of critique by postmodernists. If we leave out lard-core orthodox elements, the encounter of Marxism with postmodernism has been beneficial.

It has led it to a rethinking and re-moulding of Marxism itself. First of all there came about the recognition of a plurality and variety in Marxism itself. It has even led to speak even of post-Marxism, which is not the same as anti-Marxism. In the words of David Slater,

> The rejection of Marxism in toto serves only to maintain the myth of its coherence and unity. The post-Marxist does not dogmatically affirm the unity and coherence of Marxism, but specifies its plurality. As Laclau puts it, 'to set the historical limits of Marxism is to re-establish a living dialogue with that tradition, to endow it with a certain contemporaneity against the timelessness that its orthodox defenders attribute to it'.[27]

The introduction of a plural approach to Marxism allows its new avatar in the postmodern age. Just because Marxism does not explain everything, it does not cease to be, or become useless. The socialist ideals differ from society to society, and there can be no one single overarching socialist ideal.

When all universals and metanarratives disappear as mere constructs, what remains is plurality, diversity, context and particularity. Here is another important opening for a new understanding of emancipation. Postmodernism is the celebration of this pluralism. There is no attempt to bring all these into a new umbrella or unity. That would contradict the very concerns underlying postmodernism. Rather what we have

in postmodernity is only pluralism, the being different. This is so central in postmodern thought, that the very essence of reality - to use traditional terms - consists in "difference".[28]

What repercussions could all this have for the Third World societies? The move to deconstruct meta-narratives is a clearing of the impediments on the way to the emancipation of the peoples of Third World. They are now free to be creative and on their own in what concerns their emancipation. They are not forced to go by the trodden path, but to create the path as they go; nor are they compelled to act out "a drama already written before [they] came on the scene"[29], but write their own texts of freedom.

The privileging of diversity, difference in emancipation is implicitly a recognition of new local social movements - gender, ecological, etc. - in their emancipative potential.[30] This is particularly relevant with reference to orthodox Marxism which sees the hub of liberation in the antagonism between the working class and those who own the means of production. The context of today has become much more complex and cannot simply reduce the question of emancipation to the proletariat who cannot solely be the agents and avantgardes of liberation. There are equally serious issues centred on gender, race, and so on.

In the face of diversity in human life and affairs, what modernity did was to "manage" them by ordering them in a hierarchical scheme and pyramidal structure. Thus differences in race, culture, tradition, religion were all ordered according to a rigid superordination and subordination. All this happened, strangely, in spite of the *egalité, fraternité et liberté* - equality, fraternity and liberty - loudly proclaimed at the advent of modernity. But today in the Third World, as borne out by experience, the first crucial step for liberation is the affirmation of identity - whether it is of indigenous peoples, oppressed castes and classes, geographical regions or of linguistic groups. Be it the violent and forced centralisation, or the more subtle strategy of inclusivism through which the otherness of the other is suppressed, the marginalized people need to affirm their identity against all homogenisation. On this hinges their claims for human dignity and rights. One cannot ignore that the affirmation of the identities are today among "the weapons of the weak"[31] against the hegemonic and centralising forces. To deny them their identity and difference is to deprive them of the only source of power they seem to posses.

Admittedly, as the social theorist Ernesto Laclau rightly points out a mere "politics of difference" may not lead us anywhere.[32] For, the very constitution of the identity requires the other - other people, groups, ethnia as that from which a group delimits itself.[33] Hence

what is required is that there be communication and inter-action among the various groups. without however falling into a universalism of modernity which will serve as a lever of power in the hands of the rulers and dominators. Such an "interactive universalism" - to use an expression of Merlau Ponty - does not contradict the concerns of postmodernism, even though it has not dealt with this issue at length. Here the "difference" does not remain static. but rather the various identities get transformed even as they continue to interact and evolve new differences. One point, still, needs to be stressed: Every context has its focus, and the need of the hour. The Third World situation indicates that it is the hour when differences need to prioritised as an essential ingredient in the local and contextual emancipatory processes.[34]

In the critical theory of Habermas, the question of identity and difference does not figure in any significant way so as to be really of relevance for the marginal groups and peripheral communities of the Third World. In this respect, deconstruction and postmodernism get nearer to the concerns of the Third World societies. However, his discourse ethics, as I noted earlier, has a certain emancipatory potential. But what is of greater significance from the perspective of emancipation, is the way Habermas has analysed the relationship between power and communication, and the need to unmask and de-ideologise systematically distorted communications. His emancipatory discourse unambiguously shows his basic commitment to modernity, its causality, order. etc., and it is nowhere near what postmodernism has to offer in terms of creativity. This is so because,

> Central preoccupation of the moderns have been causality and determination as the logic of producing order. The emerging paradigm is a reflection not on the *determined (order received)* but on the constructed (order produced) character of social realities and on the contingencies involved in the process. The epistemology of constructivism is as central to poststructuralism and postmodernism as the epistemology of causality, determinism and mechanical models of social change have been to modernity.[35]

That explains in great part the difference between critical theory and postmodernism. and consequently the difference in the significance they can have for Third World societies.

IV. A PRESENT WITHOUT ROOTS AND A FUTURE WITHOUT UTOPIAS :

THE ISSUE OF HISTORY

The approach to history in the postmodern thought derives from two of its crucial stances: critique of modernity and metanarrative. Just like

in the conceptual world a universalistic holism is not possible, so too in the realm of history, there is no transcendent view-point - God's eye-view - to contemplate the whole span of history. Even more, postmodernism with a powerful stroke brings tumbling down the architectonics of history. What has just been said would require elaboration.

One of the sustaining pillars of modernity is its conception of historiography. History is viewed as in a process of evolution, from the lesser developed stages to ever higher ones. Culturally, one passes on from the stage of primitive and uncivilised to a developed and civilised historical state. Modernity was gripped by this evolutionary idea of history and the myth of progress attendant on it. From this evolutionary vision of history, the races and peoples of the Third World were seen as those who were in the state of childhood, and they required to reach, with the passage of time, the age of reason and maturity. Suffice to recall here, by way of example, a passage from Hegel, that Euro-centric thinker par excellence who imagined that he had scanned the whole expanse of human history to tell the last word on it. Regarding Africa, Hegel had this to say, from his vision of history. Africa is,

> the land of childhood, which lying beyond the day of self-conscious history, is enveloped in the darkmantle of Night...In the Negro life the characteristic point is the fact that consciousness has not yet attained to the realisation of any substantial objective existence ...What we properly understand by Africa, is the Unhistorical, Undeveloped Spirit, still involved in the conditions of mere nature, and which had to be presented here only as on the threshold of the World's History.[36]

The enterprise of Orientalism embodied much of this spirit.[37] But thanks to committed cultural anthropologists who challenged on the basis of empirical data, such cultural evolutionism and view of history. As there is no super-language above the individual and particular languages, so too cultures remain not susceptible to be ordained *secundum sub et supra* - according to below and above. There is an incommensurability in every culture, as in every language, that it defies to be compared.

Secondly, modernity viewed history as that arena which is shaped through the intervention of human freedom. This was supposed to be an overcoming of the fatalistic thought and practice of resignation. Just like the linear and evolutionary vision of history, so too this interventionist idea of history flourished in the nineteenth century. I need not go into that point here. But we know, what kind of history it turned out to be - a history of domination of nature, of other races and peoples.

What postmodernism has done is to bring to an end any lingering faith in the evolutionary conception of history and culture. But its view on

history goes far beyond than a challenge to evolutionary frame of interpretation. History, in the postmodern perception is not a temporal continuum with markings in its course. It rules out the very idea of progress which was a central dogma of the Enlightenment. Further, the present is not viewed as having its roots in the origins, in the past: so too there is no projection of any future based on the present. The past, present and future are, in short, not connected with any causal link.

Perhaps what has happened in science can help the point which postmodernism has to tell about history. In science, the new is not always based on the past. The change is change in paradigms and not from one period to another. The sequence is a construct. As Thomas Kuhn in his well known work on the *Structure of Scientific Revolution* noted, it is not the linear progression but sudden advent of a new paradigm which brings in novelty and explains phenomena until a new paradigm arrives which then overthrows the ruling one.[38] To express tautologically, a paradigm is a paradigm, and it is not deduced out of anything preceding it, nor is there anything like a super-paradigm. History is made up of such paradigmatic ruptures and indeterminacy. The same can be illustrated with what happens in art and architecture. There is no linear sequence of art or architecture in progression. All that we have in these spheres is a cumulative tradition. The new comes into existence simply as a paradigm and it does not depend upon a past form of art or architecture.

Nor is there a future in the sense of something evolving out of the present. In other words, there is no teleology in history moving into some particular goal or point. The projection of utopias into the future, would all be part of the metanarratives, including Marxism. I mention particularly Marxism, because as is well known, in its vision, the advent of classless society is the hope that lends power to the present struggles. In the middle of this century Marxist Philosopher Ernst Bloch wrote a book on the "Hope Principle" that sustains Marxism.[39] While the metanarratives elevate us to the dizzy heights of messianic and eschatalogical hope, postmodernism announces the end of history and leaves us desperate and frightened, with a chilling realisation of ourselves with no past to rely on and no future to move into.

What it means to renounce to universalistic outlook on history comes out in the thought of Lyotard, summarising whose position, Fred Dallmayr notes:

> Relinquishing universal schemes, postmodernity - in Lyotard's view - insists on the dispersed and heterogeneous character of historical episode and cultural 'language games', than lending support not toholistic theories, but only to a 'pragmatics of language particles' and to political activity only in 'patches - local determinism'.[40]

To be fair to the critical theorists, it should be admitted that, even though they did not go to this extent of radicality, nevertheless, they would concur with the postmodernists in denouncing a universal and totalling history of the Enlightenment variety. The following passage from the *Negative Dialectics* of Adorno, against the backdrop of the horrendous experiences of the World War II, is illustrative of the scepticism about the "progress of history":

> Universal history must be construed and denied. After the catastrophes that have happened, and in view of the catastrophes to come, it would be cynical to say that a plan for a better world is manifested in history and unites it. Not to be denied for that reason, however, is the unity that cements the discontinuous , chaotically splintered moments and phases of history - the unity of the control of nature, progressing to rule over [people], and finally to that over [people's] inner nature. No universal history leads from savagery to humanitarianism, but there is one leading from the slingshot to the megaton bomb. It ends in the total menace which organised [humanity] poses to organised [human beings], in the epitome of discontinuity.[41]

The negation of history as a continuum is most evident in the thought of Foucault. For him history has neither any totality nor any sequence. Each period or epoch is on its own, with its particular *episteme*. This applies in every department of life and science. For example, one may not compare the biology of eighteenth century with the preceding centuries and those following it, which is usually done. Rather biology of eighteenth century is to be compared with linguistics or philosophy of the same century[42]. The various histories of Foucault (of sexuality, of madness, prisons, etc.) are not written in an evolutionary fashion. They show how certain problematisation had come to existence at certain periods of time connected with particular discursive formations. The main purpose of these histories were to unearth the relationship between power and knowledge, and to lay bare the mechanisms operative to control discourse.[43]

If such is the case of history regarding the past and future, it has far reaching consequences for the Third World societies. The present conceptions of historiography and particularly the periodisation of history is bound to undergo radical changes. The way the past is construed in SouthAsia, for example, is often antiquarian rather than historical. This antiquarianism is not innocuous, since it can have serious political consequences, as exemplified by fascism in its reconstruction of the past. Elevating the past uncritically as the criterion and norm of the present and future can help the elites, the upper castes and classes to maintain their present hold on power; but it does not offer any emancipatory potential for the overwhelming majority of

the marginalized in the Third World societies, for whom it is indispensable to free themselves from the iron-cages of the past in which they have been held prisoners far too long. No serious social transformation can take place as long as tradition becomes the criterion of truth, and until the past is not held under the scrutiny of a critically awakened present.

As for future, it is difficult to share the orientation of postmodernism bordering on nihilism. A world without hope cannot but be a hopeless world to live in. By calling into question conventional history and historiography, it created a space and let loose new forces to refashion our relationship to the past. The advantages thereby acquired are, unfortunately, undone by postmodernity's closure to any future. This cannot but be traumatic for the peoples in the Third World societies whose historical possibilities of development as free subjects were stunted by colonialism. Now, when these subjugated people are trying to recover from the past and make a few faltering steps in the direction of future, postmodernity announces the end of history, and speaks of post-history. It can only evoke the image of the game of musical chair, in which after the Western nations have firmly occupied their seats of wealth, the Third World is kept standing and the umpire blows the whistle and announces the end of the game.

CONCLUSION

By cutting the ground under the feet of the Western hegemony, and demonising that which its imperial prowess fed on - the Enlightenment - postmodernism has opened up a lot of possibilities for re-conceiving our knowledge, power-relationships, communication and emancipation. Though postmodernism itself does not offer any alternatives, by challenging almost all the categories of modernity, its ideals and values, it has brought down the curtain on modernity and has cleared a new site for the re-construction of our world and societies according to a new paradigm. Postmodernism has driven the last nails on the coffin of the Enlightenment project, even though a critical theorist like Habermas may object with the hope that there is still life inside the coffin and it could be somehow resuscitated. By challenging the metanarratives, postmodernism has lent support to localised, particular and contextual struggles all over the Third World, as people seek to affirm their identity and their basic humanity.

While there are such innovative contributions which have radical potentialities, there is something that puts the whole enterprise of postmodernism in the dark - it is its own shadow. Postmodernism is an ambivalent enterprise. On the one hand it opens up to the other, to the Third World; it celebrates pluralism, the difference and overcomes the ethnocentrism. On the other hand, in its mode of reflection, in its points of

reference and development. it is very much Euro-centric - no less than the critical theory with which it is locked in intellectual conflict. Further. it is silent over present-day transnational capitalism and has no *critique of market forces. It seems to go soft on these issues. whereas* these are matters of crucial importance for the oppressed groups in the Third world. On the whole. neither in critical theory nor in postmodernism. the concerns of the Third world figure in any appreciable degree as warranted by the magnitude of the problems it lives through. What we often have is a "sanctioned silence" on crucial issues touching upon the peoples of the Third World in the spheres of culture. politics and economy. It cannot but raise a suspicion about the complicity of postmodernism with the structures of late capitalism. Nor is the critical theory with its both feet planted in modernity. seem to offer anything better. A further ambivalence can be noted in the radicality of postmodernism. The radicality remains a self-mortified potency which is not able to play out in the concrete. The open-endedness of the .postmodern project. which is in one sense its strength. *is also its weakness. Its orientation is such that it can be exploited* equally by leftist. centrist and rightist forces, or by radicals. liberals or neo-conservatives; having no clear options. it could be twisted and turned around; postmodernism is. then. like a prostitute that yields to the highest bidder. Ultimately. its apolitical character and failure to have any clear option, makes it least helpful to the marginalized peoples in the Third World.

What we require is a postmodernism with certain sharpness, with teeth. Such transmuted postmodernism will definitely serve the cause of the marginal peoples of the Third World. But the teething of postmodernism could happen only when it seeks to relate with the condition *and experiences of the Third World. The difference about which it speaks,* if it is not to remain an object of contemplation. would require to be translated into socio-political expressions. The difference of deconstruction and postmodernism needs the voice of dissent which only the victims can supply. A continuing dialogue between postmodernism and Third World cannot but be exciting. For example. today we note how in Third World societies, new social movements in the context of liberation are on the increase. Their heterogeneity and pluralism. *socio-culturally embedded micro-level actions on the one hand. and their* general scepticism regarding big theoretical projects of liberation. on the other. manifest similarities to the spirit of postmodernism.

Postmodernism is not without its challenges for the Third World societies. It questions all hegemonic modes and designs born in the Third World societies themselves and zealously maintained by its elites. upper castes and classes with the support of Western modernity. There is a studied refusal to face its critical gaze in strongly stratified and hierarchisised societies as in Asia. for example. Third World has also its

metanarratives which is imposed by its elites on the poor and the oppressed. In the anthills of metanarratives of the Third World are hiding the poisonous snakes of the legitimisation of a hierarchical order of society according to high and low, pure and impure. As long as postmodernism is applied to modernity, the ruling castes and classes in the Third World are comfortable and even would rejoice. But when the canons of the same postmodernity are turned and pointed towards home, what results is a sense of desperation and anger. Therefore, the pundits and mandarins of Asia, for example, would like to keep the challenges of postmodernism at a distance, and would like to ignore it by *simply labelling it as exotic*, because when it comes closer to them, they know, that it could be very dangerous, unsettling them from their familiar grounds, ideologies and positions of power. That risk the elites would not like to take. For the marginalized and peripheral people, who look for instruments for their struggles, postmodernism in its practical implications will not be ignored. For, in an age in which for the emancipation of the marginalized there is no panacea, no one single instrument can be adequate solution: postmodernism with teeth[44] could become a new weapon in the armoury of the marginalized to unsettle all kinds of hegemonies and challenge the indigenous metanarratives of domination.

NOTES

1 Cf Linda Hutcheon, *A Poetics of Postmodernism. History, Theory Fiction.* Routledge, New York - London, 1991; Madan Sarup, *An Introductory Guide to Post-structuralism and Postmodernism*, Harvester Wheatsheaf, New York - London, 1988; Zygmunt Bauman, *Postmodernity and its Discontents.* Polity Press, Oxford, 1997.

2 Significantly, Foucault himself had an essay under the same title.

3 Cf. David Couzens Hoy - Thomas McCarthy, *Critical Theory*, Blackwell, Oxford, 1994. Another work that takes up this debate is by Walter Reese-Schaefer, *Lyotard. zur Einfuehrung*. Junius, Hamburg, 1988.

4 R.J. Bernstein (ed.), *Habermas and Modernity*. Polity Press, Cambridge, 1986, p. 31.

5 Cf. The excellent work of Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism*. Vintage, London, 1994; Particularly in relation to India and Asia, cf. K.M. Panikkar, *Asia and Western Dominance. A Survey of the Vasco Da Gama Epoch of Asian History*. George Allen & Unwin Ltd. London, 1953.

6 Cf Stanislaus Swamikannu, *Deconstruction and Inter-Religious Dialogue. The Enigma of Truth and Identity Claims.* (Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation in Philosophy), University of Louvain, 1995, pp 78ff.

7 Friedrich Nietzsche, "On Truth and Lie in an Extra-Moral Sense", in Walter Kaufmann (ed & tr.), *The Portable Nietzsche*, Viking Press, New York, 1954, pp. 46-47 *(italicising mine)*

8 Michael Luntley, *Reason, Truth and Self. The Postmodern Reconditioned.* Routledge, London - New York, 1995.

9 In this sense, postmodernity goes far beyond the Marxist critique of idealism and its (Marxist) contention that the consciousness is conditioned and determined by the material realities and the productive process.

10 Christopher Norris, "What is Enlightenment? Kant according to Foucault", in Gary Gutting (ed.), The Cambridge Companion to Foucault, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1994

11 Cf. K.M. Panikkar, *Op. cit.*

12 Enrique Dussel, *Von der Erfindung Amerikas zur Entdeckung des Anderen. Ein Projekt der Transmoderne*, Patmos Verlag, Duesseldorf, 1993.

13 How and on what basis do the individually constituted subjects can act together so as to create greater solidarity and social justice, remains a fundamental problem that can hardly be solved with the premises of Enlightenment and modernity. But Rawls seems to believe that this is possible through his theory of justice. It is an attempt to maintain the liberal weltanschauung and try to accommodate within it the demands of social justice. In this way, it appears to me that Rawls is trying to piece a new cloth into the old, and the result cannot be but a worst tear! In any case, such an enterprise of liberalism is a far cry from the demands of justice in the Third World societies. Cf. J. Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1973.

14 In this regard, it may be pointed out here that a point of critique against Derrida is that he fails to distinguish between philosophy and literature, and tends to dissolve the former into the latter. In any case, the relation between the two in his thought remain ambiguous. Cf. Stanislaus Swamikannu, *op. cit.* pp. 237ff. As for R. Rorty, he believes in the narrative style of novels which with its contingencies of life can take us closer to truth than philosophy, manipulated by the "ascetic priests" and pronouncing on immutable and universal truths. Cfr Richard Rorty, "Philosophers, Novelists, and Intercultural Comparisons: Heidegger, Kundera and Dickens", in *Culture and Modernity, East-West Philosophic Perspectives*, Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, Delhi, 1994 (Indian edition), pp. 3-20

15 We can speak of Enlightenment as a "project". For, Kant had envisaged it both as a historical process as well as a task and mission.

16 Cf. Stephen K. White (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Habermas*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1995; John B. Thompson (ed.), *Habermas. Critical Debates*, The Macmillan Press, London, 1982; David Couzens Hoy - Thomas McCarthy, *Critical Theory* ..*op. cit.*

17 For details, cf. J. Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action*, vols. I & II, Beacon Press, Boston, 1984-1985.

18 Cf. Fred Dallmayr, "Modernisation and Postmodernisation: Whither India?" in *Alternatives*, vol. 17 (1992), pp. 421-452; Ananta Giri explores points of completion of Habermasian thought, solely relying on rational tools, with Indian resources of spiritual tradition. Ananta Giri, "Social Criticism, Cultural Creativity and the Contemporary Dialectics of Transformation: A Poser" (MS), A Paper Presented at the Workshop on the above theme, at Madras Institute of Development Studies, Madras, December 4-7, 1996, pp. 5ff.

19 Michael Candelaria, "The Dialectics of transcendental and Universal Pragmatics. A Marxian and Ethnic-Existential Critique", in R Fornet-Betancourt (ed.), *Diskursethik oder Befreiungsethik?*, Aachen, 1992, p. 91.

20 The Latin American thinkers have counterposed liberation ethics to the discursive ethics of Habermas and Karl-Otto Apel. For the debate on this issue, cf. R. Fornet-Betancourt (ed.), *Diskursethik oder Befreiungsethik?* Aachen, 1992; *Ethik und Befreiung*, Aachen, 1993; *Diskursethik und ihre lateinamaerikanische Kritik*, Aachen, 1993; *Konvergenz oder Divergenz? Eine Bilanz des Gespraechs zwischen Diskursethik und Befreiungsetk*, Aachen, 1994.

21 Foucault expresses his thoughts clearly in one of his interviews "On the Genealogy of Ethics" the text of which can be found in Hubert L. Dreyfus - Paul Rabinow, *Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*. University of Chicago Press. Chicago. 1983.

22 Cf Felix Wilfred. *From the Dusty Soil*. Department of Christian Studies, University of Madras. Chennai. 1995. pp. 261 ff.

23 Cf. Walter Reese-Schaefer. *Lyotard. Zur Einfuehrung. op. cit.*

24 Cf. Felix Wilfred. "Kulturelle Identitaet und Entwicklung. Kritische Reflexionen ueber Kultur und menschliche Entwicklung". in Johannes Hoffmann (ed.). *Die Vernunft in der Kulturen - Das Menschenrecht auf kultureigene Entwicklung*. IKO Verlag. Frankfurt. 1995. pp. 197-222.

25 Cf. S. Swamikannu, *op.cit.*, pp. 41ff.

26 Cf. Christopher Norris, *Derrida*. Harvard University Press. Cambridge. Massachusetts. 1987; ID., *Deconstruction. Theory and Practice*. Routledge, London- New York. 1988; S. Swamikannu. *op.cit.*; John Sturrock. *Structuralism*. Fontana Press. London. 1993, pp. 64-68.

27 David Slater, "Theories of Development and Politics of the Post-modern - Exploring a Border Zone". in *Emancipations. Modern and Postmodern*. Sage Publications. London. 1992. p. 311.

28 Those familiar with the thought of Derrida will know that the difference is meant in the double sense which the French word *difference* would imply: being *different* as well as the *deferring* or postponing.

29 Richard Rorty, "Philosophers. Novelist, and Intercultural Comparisons: Heidegger, Kundera. And Dickens". in Eliot Deutsch (ed.), *Culture and Modernity. East-West Philosophic Perspectives*. Motilal Banarsidass Publishers. Delhi. 1994, pp. 3-20 (p. 13).

30 On the significance of these movements Ananta Giri writes: "These movements are considered socio-cultural rather than socio-political insofar as their objective is to realise a new grammar of creativity in social life rather than capture power. These movements have offered alternative imagination of self and society often denied by the media-steered systems of our society. They provide an alternative language of self-actualisation and social governance - reciprocity. sharing. co-operation and renunciation" Ananta Giri. *art. cit.*, p. 25.

31 James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak. Everyday forms of Peasant Resistance*. Yale University Press, New Haven - London. 1985.

32 Today the issue is discussed under the caption of "Multiculturalism". For a reflection on the issue from an Indian perspective cf. the various contributions in *Seminar*, December 1999.

33 Cf. Ernesto Laclau, "Subject of Politics. Politics of the Subject" University of Essex (This essay was available to me for consultation in type-script. I am not aware whether it has been published). A concrete illustration of the identity-construction of exemplified in a case study by M. Muralidharan. "Hindu Community Formation in Kerala: Processes and Structures under Colonial Modernity". in *South Indian Studies*. no. 2 (July-December 1996). 234 - 259. For the theoretical discourse on the issue. cfr A.P Cohen. *The Symbolic Constructing of Community*. Ellis Horwood Limited. Chichester. 1985.

34 A note of caution needs to be added here In the West ethnic and cultural differences are exploited by right wing political forces for the agenda of neo-racism. According to its logic. because the other is different he or she should be treated differently which becomes justification for discrimination. The situation of Third World societies calls for affirmation of difference as the means through which the traditionally marginal and excluded groups stake their claim to be treated equally.

35 Cf. Jan Nederveen Pieterse. *Emancipations. Modern and Postmodern. op. cit.*, p. 27.

36 W.F. Hegel. *The Philosophy of History*. Dover Publications. New York. 1956. As cited in: Lucius Outlaw. "Lifeworlds. Philosophical Praxis: Race. Ethnicity. and Critical Theory". in Eliot Deutsch. *Culture and Modernity. op. cit.*, p. 27.

37 The dynamics of orientalism has been so well portrayed by Edward Said. *Orientalism*. Routledge & Kegan Paul. London and Henley. 1978.

38 Cf. Thomas Kuhn. *The Structure of Scientific Revolution*, University of Chicago Press. Chicago. 2nd edition. 1970: cf. also Jayan V. Narlikar - Indu Banga - Chhanda Gupta. *Philosophy of Science. Perspectives from Natural and Social Sciences*. Indian Institute of Advanced Study. Shimla. 1992.

39 Ernst Bloch. *Das Prinzip Hoffnung*. Frankfurt. 1959.

40 Fred Dallmayr, "Modernisation and Postmodernisation: Whither India?". *art. cit.*, p. 38.

41 T. Adorno. *Negative Dialectics*, Seabury Press. New York. 1979. p. 320.

42 Cf. John Sturrock. *Structuralism. op. cit.*

43 Cf. Hubert L. Deyfus - Paul Rabinow. *Michel Foucault. Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics. op. cit.*; cf. also David Macey. *The Lives of Michel Foucault*. Vintage. London. 1993.

44 Cf. Felix Wilfred. "The Postmodern with Teeth· Opportunity for a Creative Western Theology". in *Inkulturation und Kontextualitaet* (Festschrift Ludwig Bertsch), Verlag Josef Knecht. Frankfurt. 1994. pp. 321-332.

6

WHITHER CRITICAL THEORY?

SHRINIVAS V. BOKIL

1. Non-naturalistic Justification of Scientific Knowledge

Development of modern philosophy during the 17th and 18th century had its roots in the phenomenal growth of natural science and the central issue with which it concerned itself was epistemological issue concerning the possibility of empirical knowledge of external world in general and of scientific knowledge in particular. Possibility covered questions with regard to origin, structure and validity or justification. Proposals made by rationalists and empiricists are too well-known. Rationalists tried to spell out their views by providing supernaturalistic and metaphysical settings and the Empiricists, with the singular exception of David Hume, tried to offer explanations which had of its own distinct metaphysical but non-naturalistic implications. Descartes could not explain human knowledge without reference to a benevolent, an omniscient and omnipotent God who, according to him, guarantees the truth of what human beings clearly and distinctly perceive to be true. For Barkeley, in the world of things that we perceive and know, God's activity is the only force that enables human beings to know whatever they know. Locke who wrote his *Essay* as a sort of philosophy defense of Newtonian physics conceived the source of our cognitive faculties in God. Human mind and nature were considered to be ontologically distinct and different which made none of these accounts of human knowledge fully naturalistic. They appeal to something beyond the world of nature given to us in our experience. Amongst the 18th century thinkers, Hume, it seems to me, is the only thinker who clearly and boldly went against the supernaturalistic consensus and preferred to be skeptic rather than indulging in any non-naturalistic and metaphysical pretensions.

As this intellectual battle was being fiercely faught between supernaturalists and naturalists, it was Immanuel Kant who showed great ingenuity in steering his way through the dogmatic pretensions of supernaturalisitc rationalism and the skeptical apprehensions of naturalistic empiricism of Hume alone, by firmiy establishing his critical standpoint in his era-making work, *Critique of Pure Reason*. We must also note that before Kant came to the scene, the French illumination had closed the *realistic* series originating in Descartes, with its own extreme materialism or objectivity completely devoid of mind and the German illumination had closed an *idealistic* series originating again in Descartes himself with tendency to engulf itself into an extreme form of subjectivity devoid of matter. Realism and Idealism had both ended in one-sided extremes. Both these extremes had potential threats of converting philosophy into unphilosophy. Kant, by expounding his critical standpoint, united in a common bed the two strands that would together blossom into a new plant and eventually into a new vision of human life. In thus casting his net on a wider scale, it is curious to note that Kant himself attributed the genesis of his position to Hume.

> "It was reflection on David Hume that several years ago first broke my dogmatic slumber, and gave a completely new direction to my inquiries in the field of speculative philosophy".[1]

It was when he came to abandon the dogmatic metaphysical school, the Wolfian philosophy in which he had been educated, for the study of empiricsm in the sceptical form which had been impressed upon it by Hume, that Kant started giving a new critical direction to major philosophical issues debated in his times. He was extremely confident of the new critical direction that at the end of his *Critique of Pure Reason*, he came to assert,

> "Hitherto, there was no choice but to proceed either dogmatically like Wolff, or sceptically like Hume. The critical path is the only one that is still open. If the reader has had the courtesy and the patience to travel it thus far in my society he may now contribute his help towards the conversion of this footpath into a highway, by which, what many centuries were unable to effect, what indeed was impossible before the expiration of the present century, there shall be attained complete satisfaction for human reason in that which has always occupied its curiosity but always hitherto in vain." [2]

Towards the end of modern philosophy (i.e. the end of 18th centruy), Kant laid down the footpath but the question is whether Kant's readers have been able to build up a highway even after two centeries since then.

What is the achievement of the postmodern era in this respect?

Before we seek any answer to this question. it is necessary to spell out the main feature of Kant's strategy in rejecting the philosophical skepticism of David Hume and dogmatism of Christian Wolff and others as well. In order to reject skepticism, he must reject naturalism of Hume and in order to reject domatism of Christian Wolff. he must reject super-naturalism. It is significant to note that in the *Critique*, kant avoided both *naturalism and speculative philosophy to humanly* possible dimension. He accomplished this by developing a Transcendental argument and thereby introducing a new conception of Critique. The Kantian critique interrelates the three Kantian themes : the Copernican turn in Philosophy. the Transcendental method and the conception of *Philosophy as Critique*. The late Dr. R. Sundar Rajan. in his paper, "The Concept of Critique"[3] brings out the essential feature of Kant's Transcendental argument as his (i.e. Kant's) response to philosophical skepticism in the following words:

> "If successful, a transcendental argument would show that the skeptic is really undermining his own intelligibility in raising the doubts he does. Suppose that the skeptic doubts a proposition, say, P. A transcendental argument with regard to P is intended to show that P is required for any intelligible thought or discourse .... If any such argument could be produced then the skeptic *would be placed in a dilemma: either his doubt is illfounded and* P is true after all. or else there is no such thing as intelligible thought and hence his own doubt must be incoherent. This is really a very awkward situation for a skeptic to be caught in for what it comes to is that either what he says is false or unintelligible."[4]

Kant's transcendental argument thus opens up the firm possibility of rejecting the philosophical skepticism that had teased philosophers for over centuries and centuries, and more importantly, shows the way of formulating conditions of the possibility of experience and knowledge, which according to Kant. *contain a constitutive reference to thought* and judgement. The transcendental argument is mainly concerned with laying down the necessary conditions rather thatn sufficient ones for the possibility of experience and knowledge. Further. it is obvious that such an argument must be in the deductive form if it is to be treated as a *proof of the necessary conditions of experience* and knowledge. Taking the standard definition necessary conditions. viz. 'P is a necessary condtion of Q = df if Q then P'. the logical form of the transcendental argument in the context of Kant's design comes to : We have experience 'E': If we have the experience 'E' then 'P' is the necessary condition of that experiene 'E'; it thus follows that 'P' is the necessary

condtion of 'E'. Surely the formal validity of such a transcendental argument may not be suspect since the argument is in a valid form. But is it sound? Most of the controversy amongst Kant's critics have arisen over the nature and epistemic status of the premisses of his argument and one must admit that Kant's argument would fail if the premisses of the argument are controversial and hence, unacceptable. We know that in recent times, the experessions: 'a priori' and 'synthetic a priori ' (Kant's privileged expression) have received very acrimonious treatment at the hands of his critics. Naturally both as premisses and conclusion will have not only the question begging character but will also bear inefficacy for doing the job which it is supposed to do. viz.. rejection of philosophical skepticism. The challenge of philosophical skepticism posed by Hume is thus not met. But more disturbing is the consequences to which it leads, viz., Transcendental idealism. We know that the consequence of distinguishing 'phenomena' from 'noumena'. restricting human knowledge to the former and leaving the latter into the abyss of ignorance for ever - this consequences has been found to be so distasteful to philosophers from Hegel down to Strawson that if they refer to and discuss Kant's transcendental argument at all. it is only in order to reject it just for the sake of this consequence. While Hegel and many others charged Kant for having relied on Cartesian notion of subjectivity and its consequential mind-body dualism in one or the other form. Strawson rejected Kant's framework of transcendental argument because it implies "the revisionary doctrine of things as they are in themselves - reality in itself as something totally outside our experience or knowledge."[5]

> "The task I set myself in the *Bounds of Sense* was to detach what I thought to be substantially true in the *Critique* - a book I regarded and still regard as the single greatest work in modern philosophy - to detach that from the metaphysical idealism. which as I understood at least, I thought false. or even, by Kant's own best lights. dubiously intelligible or coherent........... It may help to make things clearer here if I say that I gave the book *Individuals*, the subtitle '*An Essay in Descriptive Metaphysics*' meaning by descriptive metaphysics an attempt to reveal and elucidate the most general features of the conceptual structure in terms of which we do as a matter of fact think about the world & ourselves. I contrasted 'descriptive' with revisionary metaphysics which attempts to correct that structure in a quite radical way: to revise our world picture. not simply in the way the natural scientist revises it when he reports important new empirical discoveries but by arguing that our ordinary world picture is wholly deceptive. that reality is wholly other than the way we normally conceive it. You might say that what I tried to

> do in the case of kant was to emphasise, and with qualifications, defend the strong strain of descriptive metaphysics in his work, while discarding the revisionary doctrine of things as they are in themselves, reality in itself, as something totally outside our experience and knowledge."[6]

Thus in the post-modern philosophical developments after Kant, Philosophers have tried desperately to locate non-naturalisitc elements in Kant's presentation and to eradicate them under the growing influence of Naturalism. All forms of naturalism have opposed transcendental forms of arguments all along. Consequently, Critical theory as an epistemological venture to show that mathematics and the natural sciences are defensible on *a priori* grounds against Hume's skeptical conclusion, has suffered set backs in recent times.[7] The dialectical dimension of the same venture to expose the illusions of speculative metaphysics and to substitute for them metaphysics as science was no doubt greatly welcome but wasn't thought to be thoroughgoing inasmuch as Kant's own epistemic critical theory itself laboured under a good deal of speculative metaphysics implicit in it - existence of matter and mind and their diametric opposition in all the three major fields of human life: knowledge, action and artistic creation where autonomy of human experience is essentially opposed to mechanistic necessity of physical nature. Apostle of autonomy has to be a non-naturalist. So is Kant.

2. Growth of Naturalism

No Philosopher can ever advocate 'bald naturalism' as a serious philosophical theory unless he is a naive and uncritical realist, because of the innumerable difficulties which such a theory has to face as one shifts from physical facts to human realities. A bald naturalist holds the view that all the facts that are there in the world are physical facts and what we call 'mental' or 'psychological' facts are ulimately reducible to physical ones. A natural world conceived of as a totality of physical facts all in all cannot obviously contain any psychological facts. This would mean that there are no truths to the effects that someone believes, knows, feels, wants, hates, prefers or evaluates something. But then how would he explain the facts that he himself *believes* his own thesis? Either he has to admit that there is at least one fact about himself which is not physical fact or else show what sense one can make of his *belief* within his restricted physicalist conception of the world. If he were to further assert that he *knows* that his thesis is true, then he would be in deeper troubles because *knowing* is different from *believing*, that it involves justification - a logical fact and not a physical one. Apart from anti-dualistic and anti-idealistic theses which a naturalist asserts, he also asserts as a critical element in his

doctrine, what Prof. Beck called 'the scientific thesis' according to which

> "the best or only sure method of getting knowledge is the method of carefully observing, formulating explanatory hypotheses, and empirically testing them to eliminate the false hypotheses, followed by systematic attempts to generalise observations into laws and hypotheses into theories. This is the method that has worked best in the scientific study of what is ordinarily called 'Nature'..............."[8]

The thesis suggests the tool as also the ideal of any epistemic inquiry, eschewing any appeal whatsoever to revelation, authority and intuitive self-evident truths. But in order to make this thesis operative and effective in human studies, some naturalists broaden the concept of nature so as to incorporate within it the realms of value, society and culture, mind and spirit, morality and art and to offer naturalistic accounts of these phenomena. It is thought, to use the words of Dr. Bech, that "philosophers must be more responsive, not merely to the demands for consistency of system and elegance of argument, but also to the needs of ordinary men who are not primarily philosophers but thinkers sensitive enough to the intellectual, moral and political currents of their time."[9] In the words of J.W. Krutch, "any philosophy responsive to the temper of our times (i.e. post-modern times) has to be scientific and yet sensitive to the claims of the implicit moral political ideals of our culture."[10] No claims to ultimate truths and values can be apprehended and philosophy of our times will have to be fully cognizant of the confusions in present human life, patient in its inquiry into their sources and into the ways of resolving them. Naturalists have thus maintained that one has to gasp even the phenomenon of scientific knowledge as a natural phenomenon, as something occuring to human beings without espousing any metaphysical tenet that is beyond the reach of human comprehension. There is no scope for a priorism, intuitionism or any supra-sensible and supra-logical awareness to play role in understanding complexities of human life. In the post-modern era i.e. after Kant & Hegel two very imposing but radically divergent reconstructions have taken place in philosophy. One is the Dialectical materialism of Marx, Engels and Lenin. It's a development in Europe. The other is Pragmatism of C.S. Peirce, William James and John Dewey. It's a development in U.S.A.

I shall assume some acquaintance on the part of the readers of this paper with the essentials of both the Marxian Philosophy and Pragmatism. This is not the place to recount them here in detail. I have said that the two are radically divergent reconstructions in philosophy but there is one theme which runs common to both of them. The theme concerns the unity of Natural and Social sciences. I shall limit my comments

to this theme alone and focus on the inroads which Naturalism, albeit critical, made into philosophy through the development of Marxism and Pragmatism. Both of them reject Kantian non-naturalistic way of looking at the development of science but they do this in totally different ways. Marx and his followers looked at the real human life and its various transformations as dialectical momemts of history and assumed that human consciousness is completely determined by the *material conditions - especially men's relations to the material productive* systems prevailing in their society and not other way round. One of the off-shoots of this dialectical onward march of human consciousness which is basically materialistic, is the unity of entire scientific knowledge and within its compass the unity of natural sciences and humanities (social *and philosophical disciplines). As a consistent thinker Marx 'clearly saw'* that the link and the unity between two types of science was founded on the link and the unity between the two types of phenomena - the physical and the social, which belong to the same material world. Because of this link and unity, it is possible according to Marx to visualise a perfect science of society. Marx's most important contribution to theoretical philosophy has been his view of history wherein he fused Hegel's dialectical conception of history with the material conditions of social life and movement. It was this fusion that enabled him to develop an impeccable science of society. This science sheds light on the nature of human history of struggle between classes. Classes are further defined by the relationship which the members of the society have to its productive system. Conflicts between the rulers and the ruled, masters *and slaves, feudal lords and serfs, landowners and tillers and the* capitalists and prolateriate, which reflect the general pattern of exploitation of one class by an another, constitute our human history which is working of the force of material necessity. This is Marxian Critical Theory and the critique which it offers of all our conscious achievements such as science, art, morality, religion and all literature - all forms of life - is naturalistic. But it is very bold in its formulation and sweepingly speculative. It ignores the intriguing nature of human freedom enjoyed by men and women in the making of history itself. It treats human beings as cogs in machines and reduces them to purposeless denizens of this earthly planet. The recent reversals which the Marxian Communistic society in USSR has suffered are only too well-known. The ideal of classless society proved to be utopian and in the process has given rise to *new peoblems of human relationships. The point to note is that the* dialectical materialism rejects transcendental function of human mind and consequently denies non-naturalistic (i.e. rational and a prioristic) role to it - its autonomy, epistemic, moral and aesthetic and in its place looks upon our intellectual and social transformations as dialectical moments of physical reality solely governed by mechanistic necessities.

Pragmatism of C.S. Peirce also thought of the unity of natural and social sciences but the grounds offered by the proponents of his philosophy school were logical. For Peirce, "there seemed to be no methodological apartheid between the physical on the one hand, and the biological, psychological and social on the other hand."[11] Peirce undertook a detailed study of the logic of science. The new physics, the new biology and the new social sciences, all of them, he contended, have a common logic, the logic of statistics and probability. Not only did he develop formal logic of statistic and probability, but he also propounded radically new conceptions of meaning, truth and belief which together determined the general character of Pragmatism and provided pivotal grounds for James and Dewey to further enrich and apply them in their own ways.

"Consider what effects, which might conceivably have practical bearing, we conceive the object of our conceptions to have. Then our conception of these effects is the whole of our conception of the object."[12]

"Truth is that upon which the community of investigators would agree in the long run". [13]

"This is the best definition of truth from the logical standpoint which is known to me." [14]

"Here in capsule form, is peirce's theory of belief. To be disposed to act in certain ways is not just the test or criterion of having a certain belief. It is identical with having that belief. "[15]

Modern science, for Pragmatists, is an interconnected series of concepts and conceptual schemes that have developed as a result of experimentation and observation and are fruitful for further experimentation and observation.[16] This, as one can see easily, is a dynamic conception of science-a never-ending activity carried on by inquiries in the field. This conception is no doubt profoundly influenced by thinkers like Mill and Darwin. Since Darwin's theory of Evolution was the idea of continuity of man with other forms of life, human mind, so the pragmatists thought, could be construed as a supervening or emergent capacity conceivable in purely naturalistic terms. This was also quite in keeping with their avowed rejection of any kind of dualism. It is contended that Dewey's conception of philosophic inquiry, scientific inquiry, his aesthetics and his theory of values, as also metaphysics, - all these which are considered to be his distinctive contributions - are of one piece and reflect a very consistent scientific naturalism. For him, a metaphysical judgement must also be a result of an inquiry on the generic traits manifested by existence of all kinds with no regard to their differentiation into physical and mental.

> "To see the organism in nature, the nervous system in the organism, the brain in the nervous system and the cortex in the brain, is the answer to the problems which haunt philosophy. And when thus seen, they will be seen to be in, not as marbles in the box, but as events in history, in a moving, growing, never-finished process."[17]

If, however, human being is just nothing more than a biological organism in naure, what is the nature of human experience? Dewey, in this respect, advocated a radically new conception of experience.

> "For classical empiricism experience is the way to know in contrast to rationalism's claim that to know is to apprehend realities underlying experienced appearances. Kant tried to adjudicate the dispute by attributing to mind a certain fixed and inherent structure that determines the manner in which the experienced appearances are destined to be organised into a world of things and events. Experiences, for Dewey, is a collective name for all the transactions going on between the organism and its environment. Experience is synonymous with 'situtation'. It is the occasion for inquiry, supplies the raw materials for inquiry and the evidence for judgement.........."[18].

> "Experience is shot through with felt needs, urges, drives and with enjoyments and frustrations and sufferings. The conative and the affective elements provide the occasion and material for evaluation and moral choice and the aesthetic."[19]

I do not want to give an impression that Dialectical Materialism and Pragmatism were the only two schools of thought to emerge after Kant as reactions to his Copernican revolution and transcendental method. History of Western Philosophy during the 19th century has far too richer and more complex strands that have opposed naturalistic forms of developments. Prominent figures that come to our mind are Fichte (1762-1814), John Herbart (1776-1841), Schelling (1775-1854) and Hegel (1770-1831) amongst the German thinkers and Bradley, Bosanquet and McTaggart amongst the British thinkers. Though they hold differences amongst themselves, they are all idealistic thinkers and therefore in one important sense confirm the legacy which Kant left in considering philosophy as a Critique. The characterisation of the history of Western Philosophy by Whitehead as 'a series of footnotes to Plato' is overly general but if we take a microscopic look at it, it will be seen that it's a long and tortuous battle between proponents of naturalism and adherents of non-naturalism. It is interesting to note that with the linguistic turn in 20th century philosophy, naturalism has come to emerge as the dominant philosophical position and of late it

has almost acquired the status of a haunting specter. Before any philosopher undertakes any project, he has to decide whether he is a naturalist or a non-naturalist, and to offer at least a reasonable justification of the stance which he would like to take in handling the problem on his hand. W.V.O. Quine has been greatly influential in developing philosophical naturalism which is a fallout of his several papers and works in which he came to reject rationalism, analytic-synthetic distinction, doctrine of *a priori* truths and more importantly the very notion of logical necessity. His paper 'Epistemology Naturalised' [20] brought in a new wave of several naturalised programmes, such as, 'semantics naturalised', 'naturalised belief', 'intentionality naturalised' etc. Very recently, we have a work bearing the title *Naturalising the Mind* by Fred Dretske.[21] Just consider what Quine is doing when he launches the programme of 'epistemology naturalised'. From Plato and Aristotle down to Rudolf Carnap, epistemology has been a rational reconstruction of our knowledge inclusive of science with regard to its origin and justification. Quine's blunt question is: why all this creative reconstruction, all this make-belief?[22] "Better to discover how science is in fact developed and learnt than to fabricate a fictitious structure to a similar effect."[23] Quine's advice is to study human knowledge (and obviously every other concept) in the same way as you would study anything else in nature. In his own words,

> "Knowledge, mind and meaning are part of the same world that they have to do with and they are to be studied in the same empirical spirit that animates natural science. There is no place for *a priori* philosophy."[24]

One is certainly reminded of Peirce's claim that the method of philosophy cannot be different from that of science. The crux of the issue is really the last sentence of the above pasage. Quine's philosophical naturalism has not gone unquestioned. Hillary Putnam has argued against it at length. His slogan that 'Reason cannot be naturalised' has become a banner under which modern non-naturalists have gathered to defend distinctive character of philosophy as distinguished from science.

3. Naturalism and Post-modern Critical Theory

If we step back and ask ourselves the question: What has all this foregoing talk about Naturalism to do with Post-modernism and Critical Theory? If naturalism attains such a stronghold on philosophers and restrains them from doing philosophy, especially its core disciplines - epistemology and metaphysics - how shall we have an *a priori* frame work to develop a Critical Theory for our community life? How shall we answer such questions as: What is the nature of a human being? What is the nature of a community in which he lives?

What is culture? What is history? and so on. What is morality and which ideal form of morality should philosophers recommend to make human life really a happy one and this complex world a better one? How shall we make our education and other intellectual pursüits intrinsically resourceful? As civilization advances poetry declines and as science advances metaphysics declines. Naturalism will thus continue to make inroads into philosophy like the proverbial camel who. on entering the tent of the Arab because of the extreme cold outside, managed by making apologetic advances inch by inch to drive the Arab himself out. The poor common man in Arab could not resist the camel from occupying his whole tent but if he were wise like a philosopher he would have sat on it's back and kept it under reins. My proposal is that philosophers can build up modernity (or you may call it 'post-modernity' if you want - the name does not matter) by working from within the traditions with critical eye and not by indulging in deconstruction ultimately ending up with some sort of solipsistic psychological anarchism. The main job of any Critical Theory is to comprehend all facts about human society, its beliefs including those which form the part of science, morality, art, culture and various value-systems which govern our institutional life. Unless all these facts are sifted carefully, one cannot hope to build up a Critical Theory to propose normative dimensions along which human society can move. Philosophers cannot rest content with their analysis as to how certain beliefs are *caused* and shaped in human society but they must undertake the job of critical evaluation and *justification* of those beliefs, by reference to norms furnished *a priori* by human reason. It is possible to argue. which I do not want to undertake right now. that the development of modern science of 20th centruy has become possible because of the *a priori* role played by human reason in the field of mathematics. If that is so, it would be simply a perversion to suppose that there can be no *a priori* Philosophy to provide foundations for Critical Theory in human life to streamline its onward march in the centuries to follow. The Frankfurt Institute for Social Reasearch had correctly diagnosed the need and the necessity of promoting a school of Thought endeavouring to establish dialogue with scientists - social and natural. The leaders of that school saw clearly that human reason had ceased to operate as liberating force in post-world-war society because of the domination of science and technology which were themselves the products of human reason. In other words. naturalism has come to pervade our life so much so that presently all of us find ourselves in a terribly grief-striken situation. On the one hand we have the alarming spectacle of the degeneration of values in all walks of life and on the other hand. a terrible failure of our philosophical theories in delivering goods to ameliorate the situation. The major question that

we face today is: How can human reason get over the self-imposed barriers or clutches and revive the values of the enlightenment - equality, justice, freedom and happiness? In order to build up a new critical theory which will ensure these values to mankind. I believe that we shall have to get back to Kant as early as possible and to emulate his example. Just as Kant explored a new framework to establish Philosophy as a Critique to meet the challenge of philosophical skepticism, we shall have to explore a new framework to establish once again Philosophy as a Critical Theory to meet the challenge of philosophical naturalism. An emerging Critical Theory cannot be a philosophical dogma. One need not reject one of the important contentions of naturalism that no belief is immune from revision. It can be a movement testing itself from time to time before the tribunal of human experience. Although society is a natural creation, we should not think that it cannot be reformed. Ideas do not have purely theoretical impact. They are also impetus to human action. It is true that society sometimes constitutes an overaching force over all sorts of activities by its members. But we must concede the possibility of emergences of critical reflections by a few individuals over the ideas and practices prevalent in the society. It's only through such critical activity transcending everything that is there in us by way of nature will enable us to make shifts in our ideas which will operate as forces to effect transformations in our forms of life. There may be several different cultures but we can establish 'ideal speech situations' for establishing genuine communications. Promoting understanding of cultural otherness could be the first step in the direction of structuring a healty Critical Theory or which we must accept autonomy of reason and human experience for which Kant pleaded so much. and which alone will create atmosphere for exchange of ideas.

My plea for returning to Kant might seem very very strange especially when amidst the contemporary climates of opinion we have a total denial of modernity from Descartes to Hegel and the philosophical themes which they handled. Thinkers like Rorty. Lyotard, Foucault and Derrida have structured post-modernity as a caustic critique of modernity and its themes. The use of the expression 'structured' in the last sentence might lead us to think that the critique is *logically* structured to create new system or systems of philosophy as alternatives to the systems of Descartes. Kant and Hegel. The purpose of philosophising, to use the expression associated with Derrida, is to Deconstruct. On reading the views of these post-modern thinkers. one gets an impression that postmodernity is not a systematic thought based on concepts and their logical analysis or relationships. It seems that they are precisely opposed to such systematic thinking or system building. Their writings seem to be outbursts of literary passion more interested in presenting human realities in vivid picituresque forms and styles.

I agree that they are prolific writers but, except Richard Rorty, they seem to have very moderate influence, on the present generation of philosophers. Rorty has at least some element of philosophical argument in the positions that he takes. Derrida is popular but his work is highly suspect and clumsy enough to decipher his exact and positive contribution to philosophical thought. Posterity alone will determine their places in the history of western philosophy. Ricoeur, an another post-modern thinker, is studied only by a relatively small number of philosophers now and many who have read him complain that his philosophical work is rather opaque. Of late Habermas is inviting attention from several scholars because of the role which he has played both in general theories of rationality and in contemporary political philosophy. One cannot ignore the influence of Kant that runs all through his thinking. Despite deconstructionist post-modern developments, one finds during the last fifty years or so a tremendous revival of scholarship on Descartes, Kant and Hegel and the debates which they led. Continental thought has always remained isolated from the main-stream of philosophy in the Anglo-Saxon world but let us not forget that Descartes, Kant and Hegel - all three of them were from continent and the influences which they weilded on philosophy still remains unabated and unabashed.

As Postmodernism is not, as stated above, a set of well-defined and carefully articulated philosophical doctrines supported by philosophical arguments, it looks as if it is a strong wave of emotive reactions of the intellectuals faced with economic, social and political upheavals that have taken place all over the world during and after two world wars and the impacts of new science and technologies fraught with dangers in the future for the whole of mankind. It is true that since human life has gone through several transformations of scientific knowledge, critical theories in social, political and moral spheres simply cannot be dovetailed into the conceptual frameworks available upto the end of 19th century. It is quite natural to feel the need of more adequate expressions of the realities of life that we pass through. But in seeking new ways we must not suppose that we can throw away the weight of our tradition, (I am speaking of global tradition) so drastically as the Post-modernism expects and wants us to do, and to evolve a new jargon, infatuation with which, is likely to become a hazard to the development of philosophy in general and critical theory in particular. If naturalism and post-modernism join hands, the process of de-constructing philosophy will be certainly accelerated and, I am afraid, a final blow will be served to philosophy in the near future. Rorty says that man is a *complicated* animal. But why emphasize his animality without seeing something which is so obvious in his case, viz., some of his complications emerge because of 'reason' which he possesses. Why do we want to deny such a plain truth

as that? In fact, one may want to claim that all complications of this unique animal, namely man, have their souce in reason which he possesses. One may be able to see why René Descartes, was convinced that while beasts (animals) were automata and, for that matter, very fine automata produced in nature, human beings are not machines, that human beings are free beings in virtue of reason that constitutes their essence. Reason can never be the slave of passion: its job is the job of a governess. If that job is performed meticulously, conversion of "footpath into highway" is not far off.

NOTES

1. Kant, Immanuel, *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics*, Trans. & Intron. by Dr. L.W. Beck. The library of Liberal Arts, NewYork, 1950, p.8. Also refer to Note 5 on page XI of the Introduction by Beck himself.

2. It is this passage with which Kant concludes his *Critique of Pure Reason*, vide, Para following A 856/B 884. The quote is not however from N.K. Smith's Translation. It is from *Schwegler's History of Philosophy*, English Translatiion by James Sterling, London, 1867. Naturally it reads different from Smith's.

3. Sundar Rajan, R. 'The Concept of Critique' in *Philosophy : Theory and Action- Essays in Honour of Prof. S.S. Barlingay*, Poona, India, Continental Prakashan, Poona - 30, 1980, pp. 15-49.

4. *Ibid*, pp. 16-17.

5. For distinction between Revisionary metaphysics and Descriptive metaphysics, see strawson P.F. *Individuals: An Essay in Descriptive Metaphysics*, Garden City, N.Y., Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1963.

6. Strawson, P.F. 'My Philosophy', in The *Philosophy of P.F. Strawson*, edited by P.K. Sen and Roop Rekha Verma, Indian Council of Philosophical Research , New Delhi, 1995, pp. 4-5.

7. So far as mathematical knowledge is concerned, it cannot be said that Hume was skeptic but Kant maintained that Hume's view of mathematics was a fortunate error on his part. On strict logical grounds, however, Hume should have embraced skepticism with respect to mathematics as well. For clarification on this point, vide Beck's note no. 12 in his Introduction to *Prolegomena, op.cit.*, pp. xviii-xix.

8. Beck, L.W. and Holmes, R.L. *Philosophic Inquiry*, 2nd Ed. Prentice Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, New Jersy, 1968, p.290.

9. *Ibid*, p.319.

10. Krutch, J.W., *The Modern Temper*, New York, Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1929, p.7.

11. Nakhnikian, G. (ed.) *Readings in Twentieth Century Philosophy* London, The Free Press of Glencoe - Collier Macmillan Ltd., 1963, p.158.

12. Peirce, C.S., 'How to Make Our Ideas Clear', *Popular Science Monthly*, 12, Jan 1878.

13. Peirce, C.S., *Collected Papers*, Vol V, Cambridge, Harvard Uni. Press., (1931-58), pp. 407, 565.

14. Dewey, J. *Logic, The Theory of Inquiry*, New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc, 1938., p. 345.

15. Nakhnikian G., *op. cit.*, p. 159.

16. Refer to Comant J.B., *Science and Common Sense.* New Haven. Conn. Yale Uni. Press. 1951. pp. 25 ff.

17. Dewey. John. *Experience and Nature.* Chicago. Open Court. 1925. p. 259.

18. Nakhnikian. George. *op.cit.* p. 161.

19. *Ibid.* p. 162.

20. Quine. W.V.O.. 'Epistemology Naturalised.' in his *Ontological Relativity and Other Essays.* New York. Columbia. Uni. Press. 1968.

21. A Bradford Book published by MIT Press. Cambridge. Mass. 1995. The argument of Drestke is that in order to understand mind it is not enough to understand the evolved biological machinery by means of which the mind does its job. One must also understand what the mind's job is and how that can be performed by a physical system - the nervous system. It is claimed that the book skillfully develops a representational theory of the qualitative. the phenomenal. the what-it-is-like aspects of mind that have defied traditional forms of naturalism.

22. Quine. W.V.O. *op.cit,* p.75.

23. *Ibid,* p.78.

24. *Ibid,* p.76.

7

THE SYMPTOM OF CRITIQUE

V. SANIL

"We know that the destruction of an illusion does not by itself yield truth, but only one more piece of ignorance, an extension of our empty space, a growth in our 'solitude' ". - *Nietzsche*

At the end of a serious of ends which marks contemporary philosophy we find the end of critique too. In the name of a certain philosophical event - or a media event or even a contemporary dogma - called postmodernism the very possibility of critique has been questioned. For the moment we shall remain indifferent to theis event, of course, without pretending that we are unaffected by it. In the wake of this criticism of critique, we pause for a moment to recapitulate the transformations of critical philosophy. What is the space of critique? What affect or affliction of thought would define the experience of critique?

Critique is challenged mainly in two ways. One the one hand, its negativity is raised to the highest power till it turns against itself leading to its self destruction. Or critique is asked to make way for a more positive and affirmative mode of thought. The history of critical philosophy could be seen as a series of metacritiques where each stage is radicalised by succesive stages or as a progressive transformaion of critique into an affirmative philosophy. These are not mere options critique is faced with. The critical moment exists between the horns of this dilemma. Nietzsche is a case in point for this crisis of criticism. In the totalising self destruction of Nietzschean critique Heidegger would find the traces of the forgotten question of ontology. In the same critical turn Deleuze would see the affirmative act of the reevaluation of all values - an ethics. Critique is the disquietitude of thought subtended between an ontology and an ethics. This precarious position of critique is subject of the present discussion.

Etymologically "critique" derives from the Greek word κ ρ ι υ ε ι υ which means both decision and crisis. Critique is a decisive response to a crisis or a critical situation. Crisis demands a decisive intervention; a decision or a selection or a sorting out of the situation. Crisis is not a mere problem. A genuine crisis occurs when all the available techniques of solution are also implicated in the problem situation. Crisis calls for decision but the former is not a half baked form of the latter. The clinical sense of the term *critical* discloses the nature of this crisis and intervention. Even the discourse of nuclear science adds to the semantic richness of the critical. There critical refers to a threshold beyond which the nature of nuclear reactions undergo a dramatic change.

Critique has an irreducible element of the negative. It courts scepticism, strays into lowly origin of things, digs up platitudes under profound enigmas. However this does not mean that it is mere fault finding. Ctitique involves a positive way of selection and decision where the selection of the uncommon is rejection of the common place only by implication.[1]

Criticism has always been the privilege of thought. However, with Kant critique aspires to be total, immanent and affirmative. Total critique is not methodological doubt which proceeds step by step or in a piece meal fashion. It subjects reason as a whole to criticism. Until Kant, criticism was external, taking aid at the sources of errors which lie outside reason - senses, desires, memory, etc. With Kant reason turns back upon itself to track down the sources of illusions which are internal to the operations of reason. Critique becomes the examination of reason's own nature, abilities and limits. It no longer searches for an illusion free reason. The illusions are not avoidable but are governed by the necessary and inextricable laws of reason. All that we can do is to escape the spell of these illusions by becoming aware of their inevitability. Through the act of criticism reason matures by elevating itself to the status of the guardian of its own laws.

Modern philosophy since Kant is marked by a few decisive turns - the Copernican turn, the critical turn and the transcendental turn. With the Copernican turn philosophy took up the stand point of the subject as the locus of thinking. This locus is not a self identical point or the centre of a circle. As 'Copernican revolution' the stand point of the subject is implied in many circles whose every point is a centre and also on the circumference. The transcendental turn saves these circles from turning vicious. By separating the conditioned from the conditions, it saves Copernican orbits from mere and unproductive circularity. However, a philosophy of the subject by taking a transcendental turn need not culminate in a critique - phenomenology is an example. What is the excess which drives philosophy ciritical? We may locate the Kantian critical element in two aspects of his thought - its ontological intentions and in its judicial tone. The latter

establishes the legitimate limits of reason and the former limits the phenomenological closure and testifies to a beyond of reason. The ontological disquietitude saves the critique from the transcendental solipsism of phenomenology which mistakes the *for-me-ness* of the world as *from-me-ness*. This maintains the distinction between intention and intuition, also between thinking and knowing. The judicial tone prevents critique from a mere epistemological investigation into the architecture of knowledge which could not distinguish between the fact of knowledge and the knowledge of facts. The ontological dimension sustains the Kantian dichotomies between phenomenon and noumenon, knowing and thinking, etc.

For the judicial critic the object of criticism is not perception but judgement. Reason establishes law of judgement by coming to self-knowledge by instituting a tribunal to judge itself. The law of judgement can be learned only from the act of judgement itself. Reason does not accept external authority. It is the maker and guardian of its own laws. "We are giving the orders" is its slogan. To criticise facts in the name of norms or the world in the name of reason would be external criticism. Instead of standing outside the object, critique draws out the normative self-understanding of the object to its material actuality. Critique cannot operate from any Archimedean stand point because every such uncriticised vantage point would reduce the critique to dogmatism. We can critique all that exist, not in the name of a transcendent essence, but in the normative force that constitutes the different or distorted realisation of the actual.

The transcendental turn of critical philosophy is also a turn towards the immanence of thought. Immanent critique is a vigilance against all separate transcendence. As immanent critique thinking acquires a rare austerity which prevents it from being lured by "separate transcendence". This turn shows critique's maturity to take responsibility in the making of that which is given to it. Since critique proceeds immanently criticism of the given and self criticism of reason become identical. Reason's immersion in immanence comes to testify its regard for the transcendence by refusing the latter's separateness.

Immanent critique practices a double vigilance. While it is suspicious of any "given" it also refuses to trust a "beyond" of the given. Thinking is involved not only in the making of the given but also in the unfolding of the beyond. A folding into the same should in the same movement generate an unfolding of the different - this is the task of immanent critique. Hence the paradox: it is as immanent critique that philosophy becomes wordily. Immersion into immanence distinguishes critique from mere criticism which takes on the object from the outside and thereby reduces itself to subjective opinion. However, for a philosophy of the object, if it proceeds immanently and still retains its

critical edge, it becomes imperative that it concerns itself with its outside. This outside could be historicity, body, unconcious, society, political economy, or other disciplines like natural science, technology or human sciences. Under what authority does critique take hold of its object? Mature and autonomous thinking will not accept them as privileged areas of enquiry just because it is enamoured by the topicality these areas enjoy. Critique finds its way to its objects through the immanence which opens it to its here and now. Hence the paradoxical demand to which the transcendental critique is subjected to - the immanent synthesis of difference. The Post Kantian life of critical philosophy could be seen as response to this riddle.

Both Hegel and Nietzsche began with a criticism of the incompleteness of the Kantian ciritique. Hegel was dissatisfied with the unresolved dichotomies of Kantian Philosophy. He felt that it is the unnecessary fear of falling into error that prevented Kant from crossing over the chasms and establishing the identity of the different. This move could be seen a metacritique of Kant or as a move beyond critical idealism to speculative idealism whose slogan is that rational is the real. In the post-Kantian tradition of metacritique which finds its successors in Feuerbach and Marx, philosophy can be seen as an attempt to purge the Kantian philosophy of the residual transcendents - thing-in itself, etc. As Solomon Maimon shows, it requires a critical retrieval and repetition of the pre-Kantian metaphysics- in this case Leibnitz. Critique can counter its own residual dogmatism only by retrieving or replaying the metaphysical on a different stage. However this would transform critique into a speculative metaphysics. The only way to avoid this trap is to launch a critique of speculative philosophy itself. Here one opts for a minimalist conception of philosophy which in turn will proceed as theory of society. This is the transformation of critique to critical theory..

The Frankfurt School critical theory, following the tradition of Hegel and Marx opens up Philosophical thinking to social theory and empirical research into the conditions of reproduction of the social totality. This was expected to produce a philosophical critique of society and a materialistic critique of philosophy. As an immanent critique this empirical investigation into the totality of the conditions of social productions is expected to wrench from the object of investigation, the norm with which that social totality can be criticised. This decision to proceed empirically should be seen as a partial and strategic attestation of the objectivity of the critical situation of the society. However, the social totality itself is constituted by an inverted or illusory representation of active subjective life into exterior or alienated object.

This immanent critique which affirms the object but wishes to negate its objectivity as a false appearance of the actualization of the subjective life ran aground primarily due to two reasons: first, the failure of the society to testify to the rational subjective life of a *we* to whom the critique can address itself to: secondly, the social totality itself became the symptom of a distorted reason. It is as if the injustice perpetrated by critique on the object by negating its objectivity as false is avenged in the loss of the *subject*. With no subject to couch for the totalisation, the totality itself becomes false. Once ciritque turns back upon itself to dismantle the stand point of the subject, the vocation of critical philosophy as ideology criticism becomes an overlooked error.

Nietzsche too finds the Kantian critique partial and negative. Kantian critique is incomplete because it criticises only the false claims to truth and morality and not truth and morality themselves. Kant merely pushes the conventional criticism to its limits. He confuses the positivity of the critique with a humble recognition of the rights to be criticised. It is a critique of compromise. Nietzsche disagrees with Kant on what the critique should discover. Kant discovers conditions which are external to the conditioned. Nietzsche, instead of conditions seeks the plastic principles of genesis. Kant's search for conditions populates the critique with unresolved dualism. He did not abolish the Cartesian dualism. Instead, he merely secured the unity of the self across the duals. Each of the Kantian duals is a critial reincarnation of some precritical dualism. How do we differentiate between the *duals of dualisms?* In the absence of an answer the traditions of Metacritique would collapse the diference that sustains these dualisms. A certain fashionable critique which claims to destabilise all dualism, in its utter naïveté does not even recognise the dualism of dualism. Within the post Kantian philosophy, as Deleuze says the "The 'critical' point, the horizon or focal point at which difference qua difference serves to reunite has not yet been assigned."[2]

A contemporary Nietzschean - Foucault - would locate the place of both critique and ideology in the deep structure of *19th century* European thought. Critique shares the same structure of thought with its ferocious enemies - ideology, positivism and metaphysics. Both ideology and criticism are made possibly by a crisis in representation where representation has lost its power to define the mode possible by a crisis in representation where representation has lost its power to define the mode of being common to both knowledge and things. Ideology as a scientific analysis of representation is a recapitulation of the source of all representation. While ideology seeks this source on the level of representations themselves, criticism establishes the conditions of representation beyond this level. Both ideology and criticism are born from the ruptures in the seamless web of representations maintained by the pre-critical thought.[3]

The above crisis in the order of representation marks the birth of the metaphysics of human finitude which lead to the embarassing compromise of kantian critique. Hence Nietzsche would seek the stand point of his critique beyond man. Still Nietzsche was always alert against the negativity of the critique. He assigns critique not to superman but only to a relatively superhuman type - the type of ancestors of the overman.

The recent critique of the human sciences launched by Derrida, Foucault and Deleuze are attempts develop a Nietzschean critique which commences from a standpoint beyond man. Deleuze offers a rigorous formulation of a Nietzschean critique, though here too, as we shall soon see, the critical moment is split between an ethics and ontology. He interprets Nietzsche's eternal return as the immanent synthesis of the difference and will to power as the principle of this synthesis. Here eternal return has two aspects - metaphysical and ethical. These are two inseparable moment of critique. "Critical philosophy has two inseparable moments: referring back of all things of and any kind of origin to values, but also the referring back of these values to something which is, as it were, their origin and determines their value."

We can plot the entire trajectory of Deleuzian critique between these interpretations of eternal return as a law of variation and distribution and a law of selection. His thought works through the distance that subtends, on the one hand, the univocal of Leibnitz and on the other, the affirmative selection of Neitzsche. Between these poles of ontology and ethics - he assigns the focal point of his critique to Spinoza. Here the eternal return finds a Spinozian interptetation - as the circulation of the substance through its modes. Here repetition gives way to the fold as the principle of construction of the plane of immamence. In Difference and Repetition he formulates the critical moment as at once the production or repetition on the basis of difference and selection of difference on the basis of repetition. In Spinoza the selection of difference - the ethical moment - gives way to the production of difference - ontological moment.

Once we understand the precise location of the critical moment and the distance it traverses from Kant to Nietzsche, we can rethink the contemporary apprehensions about the ideology critique. This also makes a Post-Nietzschean retrieval of Hegel possible. The Slovenian philosopher Slsvoj Zizek resurrects ideology critique through a Lacanian interpretation of Hegel. Zizek disrupts the movement of the dialectical machinery from the critical to the speculative. He jams dialectics by harnessing forces from within. This technique is different from the already available strategies to truncate the dialectics - for example in Gadamer through an amalgamation of Hegal and Heidegger which brings out the worst in both.

Zizek, like Bataile makes Hegel stand on his buttocks. For Zizek ideology is not the cunning of reason: ideology itself is cunning. Those who pronounce the end of ideology through a critical dissolution of the "Subject" are the victims of this cunning. The Postmodernist. Post structuralist criticism of the subject presupposes a constituted field of identity - a self present subject - in order to unleash its unending subversion. For them the self identity of the subject excludes the tain in the mirror that makes reflection possible. Against this Zizek would argue that failure of reflectivity is constitutive of the subject . This failure is not due to some opacity which is impenetrable by reflection. In fact, it is the failure of reflection which constitutes the opacity which is invoked to explain the failure. He opposes the post structuralist strategy to dissolve all stable identity into field of symbolic over determination. This move misses the real which resists symbolisation - the void of the real around which the signifying interplay is structured. He also contests the post modernist's anti-enlightenment ressentiment. For him the limit of enlightenment is enlightenment itself. The age of enlightenment. as in Kant. by demanding our surrender to an unconditional and formal moral law opens up an element of unconditional, senseless suffering and compulsion which would create imbalances in the social homeostasis. The power of enlightenment is precisely at the point where the critique locates its greatest weakness - in its utterly void and senseless character of its appeal; the obscenity of the law makes obedience enjoyable. For the Enlightenment the task of critique is to wake us up from dogmatic slumber. Zizek discovers that waking up is the easiest way to avoid the real.

If Deleuze ontologises ethics. Zizek ethicises ontology. According to the latter. if there is something rather than nothing. it is because. the nothing. in the form of an empty. senseless law or God dictates the creation of something "as a rather than" nothing. It is this extra or supplement of the"something" that anchors the nothing. This critical ethic retrieves the clinical sense of the critical by elaborating a moral ontology of the symptom.[4]

A symptom is not a coded message or a symbolic formation beneath which we will find true meaning of suffering. But as psychoanalysis has noticed. the symptom may not disappear even after we decipher its meaning. In the pathological formation of the symptom. the subject constitutes itself through a decision - by being something rather than dissolving under the trauma of the disease. Symptom is the real. the kernel of trauma: disease is only retroactive construction. For Zizek. as it was for Lacan. cure is identification with the symptom: not through the symbolic approporation of what the symptom says but through the repetition of the traumatic kernel of the real of the symptom.

"This then is the symptom: a particular 'pathological'. signifying formation, a binding enjoyment. an inert stain resisting communication and interpretation, a stain *which cannot be included in the circuit of* discourse, of social bond network but is at the same time a positive condition of it."[5]

Symptom is an element clinging on like a kind of parasite and "spoiling the game", but if we annihilate it things get even worse: we loose all we had - even the rest which was threatened but not yet destroyed by the symptom. This make paradox marks the crisis of *critique. As we have said critique is a decisive intervention in a critical* situation. But a therapeutic intervention which aims to annihilate the symptom only succumb to the disease. For Zizek the critical invention Would be to identify with the symptom. The symptom is already a decision against the disease and hence the only support *of critique.*

Form Kant to Zizek we have been following the proximity between *critique and crisis.* We have seen that crititque as a response to crisis is itself implicated in a crisis which we tried to describe in terms of the distance that separates ontology and ethics. Critique in not a decision or Judgement. *Nor is it paralysed by the structure of* undecidability. It is the act of working through the traumatic distance that separates the virtual structure of the undecidables and the actuality of decision. Between the solace of an ontology and the responsibilities of an ethics critique stands open wound or as a *symptom. It is a symptom - indeed a strange one for which the* symptom and the disease are one and the same.

NOTES

1. Heidegger. the master of etymological listening, hears in the word κρινειν the resonances of "to sort". "to sort out". "to lift"out that of special sort". "lifting out of the special. the uncommon. and at the same time decisive". *(What is a Thing?*, pp. 119-120.) Heidegger does not hear any intimation of "crisis" in the Greek word. His ears quicken to the lifting out or the display of the special--the special coming to stand erect in unconcealment. *aletheia.* Despite this selective hearing. Heidegger offers the following characterisations of critique. "determinative and decisive". "delimitation." "demarcation" amd "selection".Here selection primarily has a positive meaning and implies rejection only derivatively.

The characterization of critique as positive brings it closer to its ferocious enemy Positivism. Heidegger. (and later Foucault) does not fail to notice their proximity. The former notices " The sense of the term 'critique' is so little negative that it means the positive of all positive. the positing of what must be established in advance in all positing as what is determinative and decisive". {Heidegger. *What is a Thing.* p.120}. Hence for him critique belongs to the age of the mathematical. Neither Heidegger nor Foucault would allow their "critiques" to go under the name *critique.*}

2. Delueze. *Difference and Repetition*. The Athlone Press. London. 1994. p. 170.

3. "The coexistence of ideology and critical philosophy at the end of the eighteenth century - of Destutt de Tracy and Kant - divided. into two forms of thought. exterior to one another. yet simultaneous. what scientific forms of reflection. on the other hand hold together in a unity doomed to immanent dissociation. "(Foucault. *The order of Things*. *p. 240)*.4. The hermenutic version of critique - as in Habermas - too brings philosophy and psychoanalysis together where the latter acts as a model for an interpretative critique. For Habermas. the symptom is a deviant symbol formation which does not obey the grammatical rules of ordinary language. norms of action and culturally learned patterns of expression. It belongs to the private language of a self alienated subject. Psychanalytic cure establishes communication hampered by symptoms by making them disappear - through the interpretative disclosure of their hidden meaning. For Zizek. the symptom is not a symbol. It is the real which resists symbolisation.

5. Zizek. Slavoj. *The Sublime Object of Ideology*, Verso. London. 1989. p. 75.

8

POSTMODERNISM AND FEMINISM

ALOK TANDON

After the retreat of Marxist theory, postmodernism and feminism have emerged as the two most important theoretical currents of our time. Despite their uneasy initial distance from each other. there are good reasons for exploring the relations between the two. In their common struggle against the grand narratives of Western Enlightenment and modernity, both have developed deep and far raching criticisms of the institution of philosophy and have eleborated critical perspectives on the relation of philosophy to the larger culture. Though postmodernists and feminists have worked independetly on a common nexus of problems, the two tendencies have proceeded from opposite directions. Postmodernists have focussed primarily on the philosophy side of the problem by elaborating antifoundational perspectives and have drawn conclusions about the shape and character of social criticism. Whereas, for feminists, the question of philosophy has always been subordinate to an interest in social criticism. This difference in emphasis and direction has led to their complementary strengths and weaknesses. Postmodernists offer strong criticisms of foundationalism and essentalism. but their conception of social criticism tend to be weak. On the other hand. feminists offer robust conceptions of social criticism, but they tend to lapse into foundationalism and essentialism. Thus, each perspective suggests some important criticism of the other as well as the possibility of learning from each other. A postmodern reflection on feminist theory may reveal traces of essentialism while a feminist reflection on postmodernism may expose its political naivete. It seems that each is in possession of valuable resources which can help remedy the deficiencies of the other. An encounter between postmodernism and feminism opens the prospects of postmodernists feminism which integrates their respective strengths while eliminating their respective

weaknesses. The present paper is an attempt to evaluate the emerging perspective. In the first section, I shall examine the affinity between postmodernism and feminism; the second section is devoted to the points of tension between the two perspectives and in the thrid, postmodernist feminism is critically evaluated.

Though, to understand better the major issues involved in an encounter between postmodernism and feminism, a brief over view of the development of both theories would have been beneficial but for want of time and space, I shall not go into it here. Yet, we should not forget that both feminism and postmodernism are not merely descriptive categories. They are constitutive and evaluative terms, informing and helping to define the very practices which they attempt to describe. As categories of the present, they project modes of thinking about the future and evaluating the past. Let us begin our comparison by considering postmodernism's main features provided by a feminist proponent Jane Flax (1990). She characterizes the postmodern position as subscription to the theses of the death of Man, of History and of Metaphysics. Most generally stated, postmodernism rejects all essentialist conceptions of human being or nature. In facts, Man is a scoicl, historical or linguistic artefact, not a noumenal or transcendental Being, who is forever caught in the web of fictive meaning, in chains of signification. Postmodernism also denies the idea that History exists for men who support the concepts of progress and presupposes the value of unity, homogeneity, totality, closer and identity. Rejecting the belief in a rational self functioning according to universal laws, postmodernism also denies that science and philosophy can provide an objective reliable foundation for knowledge. It scorns science's claim to neutral methods that produce universally beneficial results. Language is consdered less a transparent medium through which the real is represented than a strategy for controlling behaviour. It disputes contentions which hold that conflicts between truth, knowledge and power can be overcome on grounds of reason. No truth is seen as neutral, capable of serving power without distortion and leading to freedom. From this perspective, meta-narratives are not to be trusted. Truth claims of Marxism, humanism, religion and feminism are seen as bids for power.

On the basis of above characterization of postmodern position, it is not difficult to see why feminists find this critique of the ideals of western rationalism and the Enlightenment more than a congenial ally. The corresponding feminist versions of the three theses have been very well articulated (Seyla Benhabib, 1995). Feminism, like postmodernism, calls into question the assumption of a self abstracted from its contingencies (body, emotion and social position)

but claims that, 'gender' and the various practices contributing to its constitution, is one of the most crucial contexts in which to situate the purportedly neutral and universal subject of reason. Western philosophy, positing itself as the discourse of one self identical subject, obliterates differences of gender as these shape and structure the experience and subjectivity of the self. Unquestionably, what is most attractive to feminists in postmodernism is its emphasis on difference, on the diversity and variety in social life. They reject ideas of human nature as traps to speak only about men. Universal ideas of reason and justice are also rejected for being masculine ideas specific to the needs of men. Feminists see postmodernism as a way of including previously marginalised voices, especially poor and working class women, women outside developed west and women of colour in U.S.A. If the subject of history for previous scholarship was only male head of household, then early feminist theorising left out many types of women. Postmodernism helps feminist theory to become more inclusive and be on constant alert for differences and for the specificity of culture and historical instances.

Feminism shares with postmodernism it opposition to universalizing of arguments and positions, thus allowing to see the social concreteness of our own thoughts and thoughts of others. Devoid of any universalist theoretical grounds, theory and crioticism become more pragmatic, ad hoc, contexual and local.

Postmodern critique of objectively is also shared by feminists. Methodologocally this means that each observer sees the world from his/her own position. On the basis, feminist theory criticizes Enlightenment values as being either masculine values or as having masculine consequences. Thus, gender becomes the theoritical tool to explain who benefits from Enlightenment values.

Another point of affinity between feminism and post-modernism is the proponents's mutual recognition of the importance of language. This can be seen in shirt in feminist theorizing from its emphasis in criticising oppressive male discourse to embracing varieties of discourses to the many ways of being women, to the multiplicity of sites at which we engage power.

Contemporary feminism also shares with postmodernism the ciritque of science. It reformulates the ideas of subject and object, viewer and viewed, oppressor and oppresed. For them, science is an ideology of domination, it mystifies rality and presents partial and historical truths as whole, universal and natural. The method of science ensures complete lack of identification of the scientist with his object of study which, in turn, enables him to intrude upon

and manipulate his object of study. Science presupposes, maintains and legitimizes social inequalities of power and privilege. Thus, to promote science is to promote partiarchy, for their value are the same male values: control, authority and domination, and their point of departure is the same condition of male alienation from the preproductive process. Postmodernists particularly emphasize the role played by science in war, most especially, in the initiation of atomic warfare an inthe institutionalizing and legistimizing Nazi objectives. It is not only science, disillusionment with the ideals of progress and awareness of the atrocities committed in the name of technological and economic progress are also the shared sentiments between feminits and post modernists.

Though both postmodernism and feminism have common historical roots, coming at a time that has seen the worst of worlds juxtaposed with a potential for the best, they seem to have an ambivalent relationship. No doubt, postmodernism has promoted self-assertion, identity, independence, and the validation of specific values at several level (nations, tribes, races, religions, ethenices and genders) which is appreciated by feminists (Nancy Fraser, 1989) for its emphasis on the particular, the diverse, the distinct and the marginal. But questions arise when postmodernism confronts the politics of feminism. Can we have pluralism and diversity without any specific group seeing itself not only different but better? And if one group considers itself superior, how is this superiority justified? Politics cannot but recognize the varied situations of women. Is there any consenous to which we can appeal that is above fractures?

When we consider the key issues involved, we can understand why feminists might be skeptical about postmodernism, because it centres around feminist theory, both as a theory and a politics. Given the postmodernism's heavy criticism of any theory having a moral vision that transcends the individuals spectator, how do we develop a politics? Since women must be both a character in their story and the author of that story at one and the same time, for a feminist social movement, they must have some vantage point from which to launch and assess their actions. But it is, what Benhabib (1991, p.146) calls the "responsibility of normative justification" denied to them by postmodernism. To put in her own words, "how in fact the very project of female emacipation would even be thinkable without such a regulative principle or agency, autonomy and self-hood" (1995 p.21)

For postmodernism, as there is no single idea of truth, there is no singleway of being woman but many, each one is constructed by varied aspects of their identity: Class, race age, physical and mental abilities,

sexual orientation etc. Feminism. traditionally, battles with the idea of differences between men and women, postmodernism adds to the fray the idea of differences among women. If women are so different, is there some shared essential female essance that overcomes differences and unities the women's movement that postmodernism does not recognise? If not. how difficult it is to agree on political strategy to be adopted. Similarly. if there are differences among women, men too are different, then how can we assign the idea of oppression to the masculine gender?

It should be clear by now that postmodernism could impede feminist practice if feminists take seriously the uncertainty, fragmentation. multilicity and diversity contained in strong version of postmodernism. If universalizing aspect of certain modes of analysis, for example. scientific theorizing is questioned how can feminism itself claim any epistamic advantage? Fruther, if authoritiative voice of the experts, say in the name of science, is to be criticised, one may ask by what authority feminists speak in the name of such a diverse group as women? If moral ideals, like any other ideas, are to be placed within a historical and social context, than what sort of emancipatory politics can be articulated?

On the side of postmodernism, one can say that if we look at magazines, books, music. television and advertisements. we find images of women quite different from the image of women presented by feminist theory. Does postmodern feminism claim to speak for those women who are not feminists? Can one not use postmodern theoretical approach to deconstruct feminism itself?

The above discussion about the points of conflict suggests that postmodernism is at odds with key concepts of feminism, Post-modernism denies objectivity. deconstructs subjectivity, ciritcizes foundational thought and sides with those who argue that our identity is culturally contingent. It holds that what constitutes fact. proof and evidence is a result of paradigmatic change. It furhte calls into questions the idea of a single standpoint from which to view subjects and objects in the world. Then. it cannot escape the questions whether all standpoints. even its own are equally valid? Is the theorist exempt from choosing between conflicting or competing positions or politics? If feminists choose their their politics on the grounds of opposition to gender oppression. on what grounds does post-modernist choose? And would not the postmodernist have to citicise the feminist grounding?

What made postmodernism attrative to feminist theorists is its emphasis on deconstructing prevous thought systems that exclude or

are prejudiced toward women and its emphasis on persons as political actors with possibilities to rewrite history. But. as we have seen, there are serious difficulties in forging a happy union of the two. The issue is (aptly put by Sondra Farganis in 'Postmodernism and Feminism,' 1996 p.118). Whether feminist theory. by recognising differences and priveleging multiple voices can (1) protect feminist thought from foundationalism (2) avoid the cacophony that often accompanies the recognition of knowledge's sociality. (3) nurture more pluralistic and even tolerant notice of personhood, and (4) write an emancipatory politic from a position that denies privelege. Is postmodern feminism the answer or any more sustained liason between feminism and postmodernism is unadvisable? We shall discuss next. While discussing compatibility / incompatibility between postmodernism and feminism, we should keep in mind that there is a broad array of postmodern perspectives and positions. Postmodern theories can be used to attack or defend modernity. to reconstruct radical politics or declare thjeir impossibility. (Steven Best and Douglas Kallner. 19 p. 256). There is a postmodernism of 'resistance' as well as postmodernism or 'reaction'. (Foster. 1985. p. XII). Thus. an important distinction can be made between an extreme wing of postmodern theory (Bandrillard. some saspects of Lyotard. Foucault, Deleuze and Guattari) that declare a radical break with modern theory and policits and another reconstructive wing (Jameson, Laclau and Mouffe, Flax and other postmodern feminists) that uses postmodern insights to reconstruct critical social theory and radical politics, combining modern and postmodern positions in their perspectives,. As we have seen in the previous section, and extreme version of postmodern theory rules out possibility of bringing postmodernism and feminism together fruitfully, now we shall scrutnize the claims of those postmodern feminists (Linda Nicholson. 1990. Nancy Fraser, 1989) who offer reconstructive theories. preserving the best elements of critical theory and postmodernism for their fruitful integration in feminist theorizing.

An overall strategy adopted by postmodern feminists is to go for medium strength' versions of postmodernism that do not pose antithesis between Critical Theory and postmodernism and are throretically defensible and politically enabling. To combine postmodernist incredulity towards metaparratives with social critical power of feminism they try to conceive a verson of social criticism without philosophy which can analyze sexism in its similarity and endless difference . Since sexism has a long history and is deeply embedded in contemporary societies. to understand its historical variability and mechanisms involved in formation of gender identities. postmodern critique. they argue. need not leave behind

analysis of societal macrostructures. Nor they are in favour of abandoning large theoretical tools needed to address larger political problems. For example, Fraser and Nicholoson (1990, p.23) restrict their scaling down of the feminist theoretical project only to the abandonment of the search for 'the cause of sexism' which would hold good for all societies in all historical periods, while arguing for a psotnodernist feminism which retains what they all an essential genre of political theory "the identification and critique of macrostructures of inequality and injustice which cut across the boundaries seperating relatively discrete practices and institutions." It is worth pointing out here that an abandonment of the search for the unchanging (and therefore unchangeable) cause of sexism does not mean abandoning the search for its cause here and now. Thus, postmodern feminist critique does remain theoretical, theory here would be explicitly historical, in tune with the cultural specificity of different groups within societies and periods. For example, temporally and culturally specific and periods. For example, temporally and culturally specific categories like modern, restricted, male headed, nuclear family taking precendence over a historical, functionalist categories like reproduction and mothering. Latter categories are not eschewed altogether, but rendered temporal historical narrative fan for smaller local narrative, theory, permitting each to counteract the distorting tendencies of the other. Local narratives correct the tendency of large scale account to conceal into 'quasi-metanarratives' while large contextualizing accounts help prevent local narratives while large contextualizing accounts help prevent local narratives from developing into simple demonstrations of differences'.

Such a postmodern-feminist theory, as outlined above, would be non-universalist, dispensing with the idea of a subject of history and replaceing unitary notions of feminine gender identity with plural complexly constructed conceptions of social identity. Gender is to be treated as one relevant strand among others such as class, race, ethnicity, age and sexual orientation. The result would be a pragmatic, fallibilistic mode of postmodern-feminist theorizing. It would use multiple categories when appropriate, not depending upon a single feminist method or feminist epistemology. It would "look more like a tapestry composed of threads of many different hues than one woven in single colour." (Nicholson and Fraser. 1990 p. 36)

But few questions remain, eschewing philosophical foundations, how would postmodern feminism retain its social critical emancipatory force? Can feminist theory be post modernist and still retain an interest in emancipation, once we loose the epistemological interest in history which accompany the aspirations of all struggling

historical actors? If we do not have a set of rational and logical principles to which to appeal, how can we have coherent resistance to repressive political regimes? (Hekman, 1990. P. 175). What criteria does one use in justifying political action if there can be no appeal to values that transcend time, place and specific interest?

To keep imancipatory interest alive, we must face the issue of how to value the idea of human agency without incorporating liberal notions of individualism that deemphasize the sociality of personhood? In other words, how to reconstitute the subject so that the idea of the individual as an agent in self and social change is not obliterated? How would the subject know how, when and why to act if he or she is not a self but a myriad association of complex intersections leading to diverse set of selves?

A plausible reply to above question can be given if we recognise the fact of many forms of engaged historigraphy now being practiced by feminist scholars without any recourse to metanarrative to legitimize it. Yet all these genres can be characterized as postmodern (they include local histories that recover lost traditions of female agency or resistence) and are clearly guided by an interest in women's liberation. Even their refusal to ground themselves in any sort of foundational metanarrative is motivated by an interest in emancipation.

In response to criticism that postmodern feminism lacks justificatory criteria to validate political action, a view of situated 'social criticism without philosophy' has been propounded by Nicholson and Fraser (1990). This view appreciates the essential contestedness of culture and the need to clarify and reconstruct cultural norms. But, it holds further that practices of clarifying and reconstructing norms are themselves culturally and historically situated and cannot escape that conditon. Neither requires philosophy in the meaning of a historical transcendental discourse claiming to articulate the criteria of validity for all other discourses. Thus. situated ciritcism does not preclude appeals to general norms. it only requires that these. too, be regarded as situated. A situated feminist critic may be a radical critic. she may engage in critical self clarification too. What kind of postmodern feminist politics it will lead to, before we consider that let us examine the charge that postmodern view of the subject undermines feminism by rendering it inconceievable that any one could criticize. resist or act to change their society. This charge seems to treat critical capacities as a priori ontological structure of subjectivity. as opposed to culturally constructed. But. there is nothing wrong in maintaining that culturally constructed subject can also be a critical subjects. What feminists need is to develop an alternative conceptualization

of the subject which is philosophically adequate and politically effective. The decentering of the subject must be a component of a new theory of agency that theorizes the conditions under which subjects both determine history and are determined by it.

A look at contemporary feminist political practice reveals the advantages of adopting postmodern feminist perspective. Such practice is increasingly a matter of alliances rather than one of unity around universlly shared interest or identity. Recognizing the diversity of women' s needs, it emphasizes that no single solution can be adequate for all. While some women share some common interests and face some common enemies, such commonalities are by no means universal, rather, they are interlaced with differences, even with conflicts. One can call it pluralism in feminist politics. Yet an extreme form of postmodernism with its emphasis on articulating differences without also finding out common points of convergence may provide no basis for a politics of alliance. Political struggle may become little more than single issue politics for short term gains for different groups while failing to organize various groups into alliance fighting for more general transformation. A postmodernnist - feminist form of critical inquiry may lead to a richer, more complex and multi-layered feminist solidarity.

Our discussion of postmodern feminist perspective can be concluded by saying that instead of reinforcing antithesis between the two approaches, we might reformulate the claims of each so as to render them mutually compatible. For the purpose, on the one hand, more extreme forms of postmodern theory are to be avoided, on the other, feminists must recognize the importance of modern categories such a human rights, equality and democratic freedoms which are used by them to criticise and fight against gender domination. Both have to accept that the very discourse of emancipation is a modern discourse.

One may ask in the end, do we have a fully developed postmodern feminist theory in the above perspective? Our articulation above of some of the challenges is pointer to the conclusion that we don't, yet a begining has been made. The task before postmodern feminists is first, to conceive subjectivity as endowed with critical capacities and as culturally constructed: second, to view critique as simultaneously situated and amenable to self reflection, as potentially radical and subject to warrants: third , to post a relation to history that is at once anti-foundationalist and politically engaged and finally, to develop a view of collective identities as at once discursively constructed and comple, enabling of collective action, in need of deconstruction and reconstruction. In sum, new paradigms need to be developed by postmodern feminists to fulfil the objective. For this, they might have

to integrate some of the insights of critical theory as well.

NOTES

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9

CRITICAL THEORY AND FEMINISM

C.T. INDRA

The rise of Critical theory in literature studies has been associated with the post-modern tenor of thinking in all walks of life. Earlier, there was Literary Criticism which examined works of art which represented in an aesthetic manner various facets of life. Such literary studies per se were kept at one removed from immediate socio-cultural and political forces. Study of women's writings or portrayal of women in literature was subsumed under a general paradigm of literature as a special expression of life experiences. The argument was that Literature was not a substitute for philosophy or sociology or history. It was only with the rise of the second wave of feminism that there was a felt need to enquire into the subliminal ideology in representing women in the way they have been done for centuries, mostly by men. Kate Millett in her *Sexual Politics* (1969) made a scathing attack on canonical male writers such as D.H. Lawrence and Norman Mailer for their partriarchical bias. She boldly argued that patriarchy was nothing but power politics with the men trying to dominate the women and structuring various socio-cultural institutions in such a way as to keep woman under man's control. In unequivocal terms Kate Millet denoumced the male practices in literary representation of women. A general spirit of subversion which marks post modern thinking impelled women historians of literature to question the existing literary history, especially the covert ideology of suppressing or denigrating women's writing and creativity. Elaine Showalter at Princeton University took up the task of reconstructing the tradition of women's writings by recovering forgetten female authors. She called it *A Literature of their own* (1979). The title recalls the pioneering polemical book by the English woman critic and feminist Virgina Woolf who published about five decades ago an incisive critique of patriarchy which she called *A Room of One's Own* (1924). Woolf was critical of the male suppression of female efforts at creative writing. She pagmatically attributed the predicament of women to the lack of economic independence and of exposure to the world. In her

other essays like "Professions for Women". "Three Guineas" too, she advocated what later came to be regarded as the staple principles of feminist criticism.

In the seventies and eighties, feminist critics were agonized by the fact that the very nature of women's struggle called for an eclectic theoretical base and hence, they ran the risk of not having a theory of their own. It may be useful to recall briefly the various theoretical strands which emerged in the post-structuralist period which influenced feminist critical theory. Semiotics had examined how a culture constructs its sign system. Structuralism enquired into the condition of meaning making. Deconstruction aimed at dismantling various structures of thought and all of these succeeded in demystifying value and meaning in life. It all boiled down to discourse and who controls it. This was the trend of thinking that dominated literary studies in the sixties and seventies. Developments in culture studies stemming from the work of Foucault. Post-marxists like Althusser and Frederic Jameson gave a new vigour to literary studies somewhat undermined by the negative poetics of structuralism and deconstruction. Literary theorists influenced by these cultural critics started examining literary practices as cultural practices inscribed by conflicting ideologies competing for hegemony. Feminist Criticism was inevitably influenced by the dominant intellectual paradigms in the seventies and eighties because it shared some of their concerns such as studying the motives of domination and oppression, open and covert use of power, construction of subjectivity, essentializing temporal features as if they were eternal verities. Earlier socialist feminists had identified themselves with the Marxian critique of capitalism and thus arose the triple points of class, gender and race located in the same axis. However, this was not satisfactory to feminist theorists in the post-modern period. One of the targets of attack in cultural poetics was the Enlightenment philisophy and its ally Essentialism. Historically, they were traced to the prevailing intellectual ethos in eighteenth century and the advent of colonialism in Europe. Enlightenment philosophy privileged the principles of reason and understanding over nature and instinct. Essentialism believed that there was an unchanging human nature despite temporal and regional differences. post-modern thinking violently questioned these two orthodoxies projecting them as instruments of Imperialism. Feminist critics found Althusser's rejection of Essentialism relevant for their purpose. On the side of psychology, they rejected Freud's view on castration complex and drew sustenance from Lacan's theory of Symbolic Order in which a person's subjectivity is constructed and is not exclusively biological.

Some feminist critics questioned the essentializing of female subjectivity and foregrounded the distinction between sex and gender: while sex is biological. Gender is a product of convenction. Feminist critics denounced the exploitation of women by men in the name of gender for subjugating them. These thoughts created a sense of solidarity among feminists cutting across cultural and racial differences.

However, since the eighties feminist critics came to perceive that feminist theory cannot be monolithic because one feminist's meat was found to be another one's poison. To be more precise, there was a suspicion of the Eurocentric bias of feminist theory in the minds of non-European women writers as well as critics. Even in the west, the African women writers and black feminists perceived a tendency in white feminists to donminate and make sweeping generalizations which did not fit their own racial or ethnic situation. This trend is much more prominent now when Asian feminists are asking the question, how far is white feminist ideology releveant to our situation. Hence they argue that there is not one feminism but there are feminisms. The scriptural background of the semitic culture and Judaeo - Christian tradition definitely placed woman in terms of sex and gender in a secondary role. Of course, women in the West have questioned this theological construction and clamoured for a revision.

It is useful to glance at post-modern feminist critics' objections to Milton's ideology of man-woman relationship as revealed in *Paradise Lost* as well as in his tract on divorce against the church. Milton has stated that Adam is made in the image of God and Eve from his rib and hence a Canadian feminist argues that it is not the fact that Eve was created *after* Adam that is so significant as her creation *for* him, to remedy *his* loneliness. In the West, with the weakening of Christian ethics, feminists have radically challenged the implied sexism of their theology.

In the east, however. Indian and Chinese scriptural thought do not devalue woman. In fact. in Hindu scriptures, the self has no gender, or to be precise. it is referred to in neuter gender. Even when genders are created they are posited in complementary position such as Yin and Yan, Sakti and Siva. Hence. distortions in social life should be roundly condemned by an appeal to the primal. spiritual equality.

In the *Brihdaranyaka Upanishad*, we hear sage Yajnavalkya tell his wife Maitreyi : Not for the sake of the *wife* but for the sake of the *Self* is the wife dear to us, not for the sake of the husband but for the sake of the self is the husband dear: not for the sake of the sons but for the sake of the self, are the sons dear to us...

(*Brihdarayaka Upanishad*) Ed. Vasudeva Sharma, 1938 ; pp86-87)

Consider the ideology that is proclaimed here and consider its initial socio-cultural embedding and its deeper metaphysical embedding. The pasage brings out the double dimension of sex and gender which can be abused on egotistic plane and which can also be sublimated on an integral, self-effacing plane. When man loves woman for his sake, it is possessive and she is a wife and woman (sex & gender); when a man loves a woman for herself, he loves himself. It is the same with the woman too. Indian Feminists, Hindu feminists, especially, may want to take a fresh look at feminism in the light of the implied ideology in this Upanishadic utterance. *Manu Smiriti* is also ambivalent in its ideological position when it denies independence to woman but regards her a precious things to be protected by father, husband and son. But that text speaks from the angle of Dharma-sastra and hence locates its ideology more at the vyavaharika level, the relatives, pragmatic level. It has infuriated contemporary Indian feminists and under standably so. But any society / community has some degree of native quality or propensity which finds its own level like water. Take for instance some alternative forms of sexual ideology the Western feminists have posed like lesbianism. It is untrue to say that in india or in the Orient there is no homosexualism or lesbianism. But the question is - will our society accept it as an organised form of interpersonal contact? Increasingly we have come to grant that we can't deny it. Consider the case of eunuchs. For centuries they have been used in harems in the Middle East, and kept on the margins of society. But today wes see them congregating in Kuvaham near Villupuram in Tamil Nadu for an annual ritual. Media have come forward to focus on their plight, grouse, ideological pronouncements and ritual defiance of majority ideology of heterosexualism. I am sure post-modern feminist critics would find it a significant chapter in our feminist philosophy . The fact of difference cannot be effaced at the socio-cultural level. This is also borne out by the hue and cry over Muslim Personal law in our country. The hornet's nest that the Shah bano case disturbed some years back is enough to show that there cannot be a single type of reformist ideology acceptable even within one community or class.

That takes us to the two terms which are much maligned - Essentialism and Universalism. Simone de Beauvoir, the matriarch of feminism, argued that woman has been projected as the 'other' and man is the subject. Many theorists have rejected for the last twenty years all claims of Essentialisms and Universalism.. While it is true that what Beauvoir has discovered is the prevailing situation in many societies, the problem of discrimination cannot be solved except at the level of

essence. Difference there is bound to be, but when it becomes discrimination it brings distortion. Similarly there cannot be uniformity with regard to women's situation in different eras and different regions. But when there is injustice, it must be universally acknowledged. Hence when we move beyond the post-modern era we might do well to invoke once again the parameters of Essentialism and Universality because it is on that plane that discords may lead to concord and harmony instead of getting dissolved in abstract theory.

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10

A FAD, A CULT OF JARGON, OR A SIGNIFICANT INTELLECTUAL TREND?

An Introduction to Postmodernism, with special reference to the Indian Context

JOE MANNATH

1. Introduction

For a relatively young movement in social theory, the arts and the humanities, postmodernism boasts of a rich and growing literature. To give a small example, in July this year, I checked the holdings of the Fordham University library in New York, punching in "postmodernism" as the subject key word. The computer informed me that the library had six hundred and thirty-eight books dealing with the subject. There is no way a small paper can even summmarize the meanings, impact and implications of this twentieth century intellectual trend, nor indicate all the authors and ideas that are labelled "postmodern."

In his overview of postmodernism Professor Madan Swarup of South Bank University, London, paints the scene in these bold strokes: "Postmodernism is being talked and written about everywhere in contemporary Western societies. The term postmodern is being used in many artistic, intellectual and academic fields. The figures usually associated with postmodernism include: Rauschenberg, Baselitz, Schnabel, Kiefer, warhol and, perhaps, Bacon, in art; Jencks and Venturi in architecture; Artaud in drama; Barth, Barthelme and Pynchon in fiction; Lynch in film *(Blue Velvet)*; Sherman in photography; Derrida, Lyotard, Baudrillard in philosophy. There are, of course, other subjects that ought to be mentioned: anthropology, geography, sociology ... the list is endless, and the names of those included and excluded lead to vigorous and bitter controversies. But one thing is clear: postmodernism is of great interest to a wide range of people because it directs out attention to the changes, the major transformations, taking place in contemporary society and culture. The term is at once fashionable and elusive."[1]

We can, perhaps, start with the demarcation of postmodernism given by James Beckford. It seems to be an adequate "working definition" to start with. It will also show the reader that postmodernism is not merely whatever comes after the modern period, but indicates a different stance, a way (or ways) of seeing things, a type of mentality and theory that is consciously in contrast to what has gone ahead.

In the brief and rather precise characterization given by Beckford, postmodernim has the following features:

(1) A refusal to regard positivistic, rationalistic, instrumental criteria as the sole or exclusive standard of worthwhile knowledge.

(2) A willingness to combine symbols from disparate codes or frameworks of meaning, even at the cost of disjunctions and eclecticism.

(3) A celebration of spontaneity, fragmentation, superficiality, irony and playfulness.

(4) A willingness to abandon the search for over-arching or triumphalist myths, narratives or frameworks of knowledge.[2]

Postmodernism, in other words, is the blanket term used to indicate an intellectual trend found in literature, the arts (including architecture), philosophy and theology, that takes a conscious distance from the positions identified with modernity. It questions and rejects many of the assumptions of modern thought. It doing this, postmodernism confuses some, thrills others, and raises important questions that affect almost all branches of human discourse. It is not just a fad promoted by a few ivory tower thinkers cut off from real life. The issues it raises, and the language in which the challenges are posed, may strike those who are unfamiliar with it as strange and even nonsensical; but, if we listen to[3] it carefully, we are forced to confront many of our unquestioned assumptions, and our ways of seeing the world. It will affect our perceptions, and probably change the way we theorize about the human, about society, about religion and ethics.

Making a conscious decision to eschew jargon as much as possible, I have organized this paper as follows. Sharing with you my own attempt to understand what goes by the name "postmodernism" and to understand its message and impact, this paper attempts the following steps:

One: to present what academics today understand by this blanket term, "postmodernism";

Two: to give the reasons why some writers and artists (mostly in Western Europe) started using this term:

Three: to sketch the main characteristics of "modernism" to which post-modernism is supposed to be a conscious reaction;

Four: to look at some valid insights of postmodernism, as well as a few possible pitfalls:

Five: to view it from our situation as Indian academics at the end of the twentieth century.

Since this is just one of the many papers presented and discussed at a national seminar, I do not by any means aim at being exhaustive: these pages are, far more accurately, an invitation to dialogue.

2. *What is Postmodernism?*

Postmodernism is not an "ism" in the way we would understand a set of doctrines such as Vaishnavism, or Catholicism or Marxism. It has no "founding father" and no catechism of essential tenets. One of the amusing (or frustrating) aspects of PM, in fact is this: Ask a person who uses the word in writing and speech to define it for you, and you are likely to get a reply like, "Well, you know, it is hard to define...It is not exactly a doctrine... or even a set of doctrines."

Postmodernism expresses more a mood of our times than a doctrine. It is more a vague sense of malaise at the distortions implied in the intellectual priorities of the period termed as modern. It is a felt need to look for more adequate expressions of human creativity than the straight jackets found in modern philosophy, literature, art forms and conceptions of science. It pervades the humanities more than the physical sciences, though it is influenced by the explosive changes in the sciences, particularly by our new understandings of what it means to do science. As the name itself tells us, academics and artists who refer to their works (or who have been identified by others) as postmodern, stand in conscious disparity or even opposition to what they understand as modern. This is why we cannot understand this cultural phenomenon unless we look at the period called "modern," see how consciously postmodern authors/artists see it, and sort out the new paths in literature, in the arts, in social theory, in religious studies, in philosophy, and in ethical issues that are identified as "postmodern."

I leave out, for the time being, the certainly valid questions about postmodernism's provenance and patrons: Is it mostly or only a Western phenomenon? Is it merely an intellectual game which academics and others who have the time for leisurely pursuits can afford to play—a distinctly upper class word game—another change in fashion to discuss with people who do not have to worry about unemployment or housing or family problems? We shall look at these questions, summarily at least, in the last part of this paper.

Since postmodernism is perceived, rightly or wrongly, as a pervasive critique of the modern modes of thought (as well as of the social organization and political equations justified by it), many academics have jumped on to this bandwagon. Philosophers, theologians, social scientists literary critics and connoisseurs of the arts often pepper their discourse with such statements as, "to look at this from a postmodernist perspective," or "there is, of course, the postmodernist critique of this whole position," or "I am essentially postmodernist," "our audience is the postmodern person," etc. Behind such statements (if they reflect well thought out intellectual positions and not merely a cult of fashionable jargon) lies the conviction that there is something new in human intellectual history that we have take into serious account: that the tectonic

plates have shifted, causing many minor and a few major quakes in our understanding of ourselves, of society and of the world in which we live: that the new perception (even if not fully articulated) differs markedly from our previous ("modern") ways of inquiring about things, understanding who we are, and how we interpret the world around us.

"Postmodernism is not what you think," says the American scholar Charles Lemart. In fact, that is the very title of his book.[4] In this work he takes pains to explain postmodernism through examples taken from different cultures (eg, the USA and Korea), from architecture, from the media. One thing he insists on is: "Postmodernism is not what you think, that is: Not only is it not what you might suppose it is, it is not *primarily* something that one thinks....It is not *principally* (and certainly not exclusively) a form of social thought. True, it has spawned a great deal of social theory. But this fact alone must be interpreted with respect to the more interesting question: What does the remarkable appearance of postmodernism in fields as seemingly different from each other as social theory, architecture, and pop music say about the world?"[5]

Lemart asks us to keep in mind that a theory is not the same as the state of the world it refers to. To understand the first, we have to be in touch with the second. Thus, for him, "modernity is the dominant reality in the worldly affairs of Europe and North America and their vast imperial systems across the globe from the first age of explorations in the late fifteenth century through at least the last two decades following World War II. Thus, just as modernism would be the culture of that age, so postmodernism is the culture (including the social theories) of an age that is alleged to be after, against, but still mixed up with modernity. Thus postmodern social theorists are usually preoccupied with events occurring in the last half-century and especially those that made the 1960s such a notorious time. It was then, postmodernists believe, that the world began to change. It was then that modernity, they think, started visibly to come apart."[6]

One more thing to keep in mind. After presenting cases of famous TV stars "created" by the media, Lemart goes to add: "Social theories of the postmodern are not so much arguments from undisputed facts as representations of a way of understanding the world."[7] In this sense, we cannot "prove" that the world has become postmodern.[8]

The writer most associated with postmodernism is Jean-Francois Lyotard. In his work *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, published in 1979, Lyotard gives this summary of postmodernism: "Scientific knowledge is a kind of discourse" (page 3). He does not consider it the only form of discourse or as the norm of all discourse. He adds: "I define *postmodern* as incredulity toward meta-narratives" (p.xxiv). This is probably the best-known description of postmodernism—the rejection of meta-narratives, or of the grand story or the general theory that claims to explain everything. Lyotard claims that all knowledge has a social basis and a supporting culture in which it is produced. The culture represents the meta-narrative. All forms of knowledge, including science, depend on the legitimacy afforded by the culture. Modernity is the

culture that believes in meta-narratives about the "truth" of science, and truth itself. Postmodernism, in contrast, is the culture in which these meta-narratives are not universally held to be completely credible.[9]

Another striking expression of Lyotard: "Let us wage war on totality...let us activate differences and save the honour of the name."[10]

It may be helpful at this stage to summarize and recapitulate some of the key terms in our discussion. I am following Madan Swarup here.

Modernity is the period that began with the Renaissance, and was defined in contrast to antiquity. It included the social, economic and political systems developed in the West from the eighteenth century onwards. *Postmodernity* refers to the dissolution of the social forms associated with modernity (e.g., the Enlightenment view of education and knowledge, with their belief in continual progress). Authors do not agree whether there is greater continuity or break between the two periods. *Modernization* indicates the stages of social development based on industrialization. *Modernism* concerns a particular set of cultural or aesthetic styles that began around the turn of the century. The search was to find the inner truth behind the appearance. Here are the big names connected with modernism: Joyce, Yeats, Proust, Kafka in literature; Eliot and Pound in poetry; Strindberg and Pirandello in drama; Cezanne, Picasso, Matisse, the Expressionist, Futurist, Dadaist and Surreliast movements in painting; Schoenberg and Berg in music. *Postmodernism* was a term used by artists in New York in the 1960s and by European theorists in the 1970s. It rejects the legitimizing myths of modernity and the totalizing function of reason. More about this further on.[11]

3. Reasons for the New Type of Consciousness:

The reasons for this new type of consciousness are many. They come from various branches of human experience and many disparate areas of intellectual inquiry. To name a few:

(a) A greater awareness of the *pluralism of cultures* around the world, some of them very different from one's own: This truth applies to the world as a whole, as well as to groups within nations. We should keep in mind not merely the obvious pluralism of cultures, but also the new social movements, such as feminism, the struggle for racial equality, the gay and lesbian rights movement, or the dalit movement in India. Another important social event is the affirmation of ethnicities, as opposed to nationalities, as a primary basis of social identification. This has happened in Africa, in the former Yugoslavia, in the former USSR, and elsewhere. So, too, some traditional cultures have formed the basis for opposition to modernist cultures. Think of various fundamentalisms alive and active today in different parts of the world.[12]

(b) The *end of the colonial era*, especially the emancipation of major countries like India and whole nations in Africa. During the period of colonization, the colonizer's culture (Spanish in the sixteenth century, Dutch in the seventeenth, British in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, with the US cultural dominance of much of this century) was perceived or imposed (or both) as the only valid

(or evidently superior) pattern of civilization. According to some. "the defeat of the Americans in Vietnam marked the most impressive decolonizing event of the 1970s."[13] *The collapse of the colonial system destroyed the economic base on which the so-called modern world was built.*

(c) *Radical critique of positions and methods of inquiry* formerly held as sacred or inviolable: Think of Karl Marx's interpretation of social relations and religion in a suprastructure- infrastructure key: Sigmund Freud's challenge to *rethink our common sense understanding* of the human: Einsteinian physics which radically rethinks Newton's concept of science; the new patterns of thought in the sciences ushered in by quantum theory and Heisenberg's uncertainly *principle.*

(d) The *awareness of the cultural conditioning* of philosophical, ethical and *religious teachings once held as universally valid.* Truth is no abstract entity. Our conquest of truth is conditioned by our cultural, economic and religious settings.

(d) The *sense of history:* the historical nature of every inquiry and every conclusion. We cannot stand outside history and study an event or interpret the *past.*

(e) The stark realization that science is not an answer to all our problems, that *science and technology are basically ambiguous* in their relationship to *human progress: that technology can both heal and kill. This is true of DDT,* or plastic, or the atom bomb.

(f) The increasing doubts about the so-called ethical neutrality of scientific activity. *No human activity is ethically neutral,* whether it be research into better vaccines, or the production of nuclear arms, or the building of better computers.

(g) The awareness of the part played by the *non-rational in our life:* the greater readiness to admit the role of the emotions, and hence by the insights *provided by artistic activity.*

What I have briefly sketched here, has been examined in detail in the different fields of academic endeavour: literature, philosophy (including philosophy of science), social sciences, theology,... Outside the academic world, and at times in collaboration with it, artists, architects and others led by the creative muse, *have taken postmodernist stands. There are forms of* painting and architecture and poetry, as we know, that are termed postmodern. Lemart's book examines the structure of the AT&T (now Sony) skyscraper to explain what "modern" and "postmodern" *can mean in architecture.*[14] *To quote just one surprising* example of a trend, the winter 1996-97 issue of the reputed American journal *Cross Currents* was dedicated to this theme: "Spiritualities in a Post-Einsteinian Universe." The first article is: "Praying in a Post-Einsteinian Universe."[15]

4. The Characteristics of the "Modern" World—and the birth of the Postmodern:

While postmodernism has no creed or theory, it has certain definite views on the world it distances itself from: the modern world, as we can see it today, from our vantage point.

Briefly put, the following traits would mark the modern world, as postmodernist critics would describe it: [16]

(1) Dualism: Dualism in our representation of the human, as presented by Rene' Descartes, and at the level of knowledge, as proposed by Immanuel Kant. Dualism marked influential ways of understanding the human (e.g., the soul as superior to the body), gender relations (the male as superior to the female), etc. Dualism is not an innocent or impartial division of reality into two aspects. No, there is a clear order of what is higher and what is lower. Thus, the mental was placed above the bodily, the inner over the outer, the male over the female, etc. The area of the spirit or of mind was understood as fundamentally different from that of matter. So, too, reason was supposed to be superior to, and prevail over, emotions.[17]

(2) Critical rationality: Most modern thinkers considered reason, particularly critical rationality, as the highest expression of human thought. *Kant's thinking* was a major influence on later philosophers and contributors in other fields. Among the disciplines developed by critical rationality, the sciences were considered "superior" to the rest. "Scientific" thought was proposed as the paradigm for all self-respecting systematic work, especially in the academia.

(3) The Belief in Progress: "Progress" was seen as a good thing, and would solve all our problems. Freud, for example, had this sort of "faith" in what he called "our God, Logos or reason." He held that human reason would slowly solve more and more problems, without recourse to God, whom he considered an imaginary father-figure to whom the neurotic, the immature and the weak had recourse.

(4) Centre and Periphery: Some cultures and groups were considered superior and seen as the criterion of civilization. Thus, for instance, European cultures were seen and proposed as more "civilized" than *Indian or Chinese* cultures. In Charles Lemart's words, "one of the most enduring features of the classic system was that there was always one, mostly unrivaled, imperial center."[18] The imperial powers (Spain or Holland or Britain or the US) were not only the centre of the world's economic and political system, but also the centre of world culture. Didn't many of us, too, rate the "culture" or "civilization" of a country or group according to how close or far they were from perceived Western standards?

At the level of socio-political action, societies were *divided into "developed"* and "underdeveloped." What underdeveloped societies had to do was to learn from the developed ones and catch up with them.

(5) A metaphysical rather than a historical sense of reality: Reality was seen as having a fixed

nature, rather than evolving historically. This view *influenced our* ethical theories and many other areas of human activity. [19]

Diogenes Allen of Princeton Theological Seminary writes of the collapse of the "four pillars of modernity," namely, self-sufficiency, reason, progress, and optimism.[20]

Writers and artists who consider themselves postmodern stand in conscious contrast to this modern mentality. They see the world and the role of human beings in it in quite new and different ways. Here are the main ways in which this new vision (postmodernism) differs from the modern:

(1) The world is seen as evolutionary: The world is not all finished and out there waiting to be discovered. The world is in constant change, and undergoes unforeseen transformations during our very process of getting to know it.

(2) Everything is related to everything else: Nothing exists in isolation, as complete and independent. Even more radically, according to forms of quantum theory, reality at its most fundamental level consists not of "things" but of dynamic relations. This view is miles away from the mechanicistic view of nature of nineteenth century physics.

(3) Reality is mysterious: We cannot fully fathom the nature of things, nor, much less, how they are going to evolve. You cannot predict the outcome of a procedure with full certainty beforehand. In this sense, today's science is more modest and more open to other ways of knowing.

(4) Knowledge is seen as a process and as a cultural artifact: To know is to participate in a process. And this process is necessarily culturally conditioned. One of the main reasons for this cultural conditioning is the central role of language in all knowledge and all that a language brings with it.

(5) Science and technology are ambiguous: Not all "progress" is necessarily a good thing. The Holocaust, the World Wars, Hiroshima, the ecological crisis—these have taken away our naive optimism. Science is not necessarily our saviour. Technology need not make our lives safer or better. To quote Diogenes Allen, "The third pillar of the Enlightenment is belief in inevitable progress. Modern science and technology so improved life that they led to a belief in progress, and in time to belief in *inevitable* progress. We are now faced with our failure to eradicate such serious social and economic problems as crime, pollution, poverty, racism, and war, and we are becoming uneasy. We may be able to surmount our difficulties, but it is not *inevitable* that we shall. The optimism of inevitable progress has become tarnished...there is an increasing concern that education and social reform may not be enough, and puzzlement about what else is needed."[21]

(6) A new world order: There is no longer one economic or cultural centre for the whole world. The scene is very different today from what it was during earlier (say, colonial) days. There is still economic and cultural domination, but the arrangement is different from colonial times. In the new world order, a number of North American and European nations, plus Japan, in occasional consultation with Russia and China, control the reins of the world economy. There are sharp differences in interests, perceptions and policies among them.

(7) A strong rejection of "grand narratives": Postmodernism, especially in the form proposed by Lyotard, rejects the "big story" in favour of the "little stories." There is a clear suspicion of all grand narratives, that is, of social or

philosophical views that claim to explain everything. The human condition varies greatly from one setting to another: hence the rejection of the clever grand theory that would claim to diagnose and solve all human problems. Thus, postmodernism would reject messianisms like classical Marxism, or even a feminism that would want to speak for all women, everywhere.[22]

This is perhaps the most typical trait that most scholars tend to identify with postmodernism.

5. The Breath of Fresh Air—and the Confusion—brought by Postmodernism:

If these insights are taken seriously, they radically question many of the assumptions on which the modern world was based. Among other things, it would challenge the following:

(a) the claim of any culture or group to consider itself superior: That may sound nice and appealing, even intellectually stimulating, provided we are demanding that others take us more seriously, as, for instance, is the case with thinkers/writers from the third world, especially from former colonies. But we may not want to be challenged about the area where we are the centre and others form the periphery. This can happen in many ways—"higher" and "lower" castes in our society, with their self-definitions and tendency to allot others a place on the ladder according to our criteria; clergy and laity in religious organizations; men and women in social and religious roles. Postmodernism challenges the alleged right of any group to erect itself into the centre and the norm, according to which the rest are to be rated.

(b) the unjust gender equations which reflect unequal social relations in other areas, too;

(c) the rape of nature to advance technology: Is a glossy magazine a sign of progress if its production involves the destruction of thousands of trees? Is automation a sign of progress if it throws thousands of workers out of their jobs?

(d) the marginalization of large sections of the people in the name of progress and modernization (e.g., the large slums found in most of our cities):

(e) the neglect of the arts in the bequeathing of culture (the cerebral gets the lion's share of attention, to the neglect of the emotional);

(f) the need to study the arts forms, writings, unwritten histories of hitherto marginalized groups (e.g., tribal art):

(g) the possibility of re-reading texts, such as, literary or religious classics, from many perspectives. E.g., There can be a feminist re-reading of a religious text or a dalit re-interpretation of a canon.

(h) studies to expose the ideology behind many theories (religious, social, political). Knowledge, including science, is never an ethically or culturally neutral activity.[23]

Precisely because postmodernism is not a set theory, nor a movement organized by a power lobby, it can free intellectual work to be true to itself

not to be tied to the crippling assumptions of modern culture. It can help us to be aware of the dehumanizing ideologies of modernism which we may have absorbed, consciously or unconsciously. The postmodern "revolt" is a timely reminder that asks us: *Are you sure that is how things are? Through whose eyes are you looking at the world—and at yourself? How do you know that what you have been taught as the truth is really true? What power game lurks behind this apparently neutral "truth"? Who defines progress, and for whom? Who makes the rules (and for whom)—in literature, research, art, religion, hermeneutics, politics, ...? When you write history, or speak of "the human," whose stories are you telling? Why do you assume that scientific rationality is the highest and most reliable form of knowledge?*

The postmodernist contention is that we need to look at the world with new eyes, and that this new perspective (or the many perspectives possible) are better than the classical or modern. "Postmodernism is a culture that believes there is a better world than the modern one. In particular it disapproves of modernism's uncritical assumption that European culture (including its diaspora versions in such places as South Africa, the United States, Australia, and Argentina) is an authentic, self-evident, and true universal culture in which all the peoples of the world ought to believe. Postmodernism is a culture that prefers to break things up, to respect the several parts of social world. When it speaks of culture, it prefers to speak of cultures."[24] Such views are threatening for some and confusing for others. No wonder postmodernism has its share of enemies, who see it as an intellectual virus, or worse.[25] Others, instead, see the rich possibilities offered by this deep and broad shift in consciousness.[26]

Each field has probably its own understanding of postmodernism. There is no "grand theory" of postmodernism which encompasses all subjects as sub-fields. To quote an area this writer is familiar with, one area where postmodern theories and concerns have had great impact is religious studies.[27] The impact in literature and the arts is well-known, both directly, and in their spill-over effect in related fields, such as, the re-reading and analysis of religious texts.

Is postmodernism, then, a clear and conscious break with the modern? Yes and no. There are authors who hold that it is such a break. Justifying their position would be the kind of opposition we have outlined above, especially the rejection of grand narratives, the dethroning of discursive reason and the rejection of a privileged centre. On the other hand, postmodernism can also be seen as a continuation and growth of modernism, as other authors hold. They point out that postmodernism, for all its strident attacks on the modern, accepts and even deepens some of the central axioms and values of modern culture. It certainly cannot do without reason, or without notions of the self. Postmodernism certainly does not reject the modern values of freedom, rationality and emancipation. Nor do postmodernists throw overboard such key ingredients as science, technology or objective reality.[28]

The distinction some authors make between radical postmodernism and strategic postmodernism seems therefore to be justified. "*Radical postmodernism*

tends to believe that modernity is utterly overthrown by a new social arrangement in which reality is a virtual reality, in which the differences between fact and fiction no longer apply, and in which there is little basis for defending any specific idea or ideal as more real than any other...*Strategic postmodernism* believes that modernity is too clever, too subtle in its workings, for any one to be able to criticize it from the point of view of its own ideas. Yet, this position also believes that we have no sensible choice but to use modern culture, that is: to subvert the culture, to overcome its denial of differences, its deceptive deployment of *power/knowledge*, its self-denying ideologies."[29]

Philip Sheldrake is an author who criticizes postmodernism on several counts. According to him, "postmodernism can fall into the very traps it criticizes. It continually reminds us that for everything we say or do there is a context. It is rightly suspicious of dogmas or ideologies that proclaim a single way of expressing truth for every possible time and place. Such 'meta-narratives' (to use a postmodernist term) tend not to acknowledge their own historicity and partiality."[30]

Another danger Sheldrake points out is the undermining of a responsible ethics (since no clear explanations are possible, and no stand may be taken).[31]

Other are put off by the excess of jargon and the high degree of abstract language used by postmodern authors. Any reader of Lyotard[32] or Derrida[33] or their followers will, I think, agree with this statement. I do not know how far this is due to the style of writing preferred by the pioneers of postmodernism, or due to the French penchant for jargon (?), or caused at least in part by the newness of the subject matter. Whatever the reason, many postmodernist writings ooze with jargon, and this is one of the reasons why it sounds unnecessarily abstruse to the non-initiated. Of the major writers associated with postmodernism, Derrida, in particular, is noted for an abstract and difficult style of writing.[34]

There is much truth, unfortunately, in this observation (found in an otherwise sympathetic review of two recent books of postmodern theology): "There are too many contemporary writers, of course, who are drawn to the vocabulary of postmodernism just for its own sake; infatuation with jargon is an occupational hazard for those engaged in postmodern theorizing." [35] To cite a passage from one of the books referred to: "To what is the thought of the thinking of being as the being of God when God is not being God a response?" Does one have to write like this? Can't the author say whatever he may want to say in this sentence in clearer—much clearer—language?

Another weakness of postmodernism is its eel-like quality. You cannot hold it down and examine it. It is vague, diffuse, constantly changing. Its patrons may consider this a strength, saying that, precisely because it is new, vibrant and alive, it shifts constantly and refuses to be tied down to any one definition or field of research. Have you ever tried asking someone who uses the word in speech or writing to tell you in a few simple words what he/she means by postmodernism? If you have, you will probably agree with me.

6. Postmodernism and the Indian Academic:

If we are to be true postmoderns, what we probably need to do would include the following:

(a) Look around and see how we can integrate the different forms of thinking (the different "cultures") co-existing right around us, without making any of them a privileged partner, nor excluding any of them;

(b) To dialogue with the arts more seriously and systematically (in order to break the barrier between "reason" and "emotion");

(c) To stop looking up to the West for intellectual leadership (as we may be doing in our very discussions on postmodernism), but truly to "bring the periphery to the centre";

(d) To take such social movements as feminism and de-colonization more seriously, both in our intellectual work and in social organization;

(e) To examine critically the highly unequal power equations hidden behind such trends as globalization:

(f) To look critically at how we organize education itself, and the part we play in it. Isn't it a highly structured power-equation, with clear centres and peripheries, with ideologies that need critique?

(g) To examine the role of the intellectual (which cannot be restricted to running seminars or writing articles like this!) in a country ridden by corruption, which lives partly in a pre-modern feudal world, partly in a hierarchically organized "modern" world and very marginally in a postmodern inner world.

7. A model—perhaps

A figure who comes to my mind as I end this short paper, is Mahatma Gandhi. It can be reasonably argued that he was a true post-modern. He saw through the fallacies of what went then by the name of progress and civilization, and proposed alternatives. That his political allies did not follow his vision does not negate its validity. Gandhiji's critique of exploitative ideologies, his refusal to be mesmerized by modern technology, his openness to whatever was humanizing in any group or person or culture, the central place he tried to assign to India's many villages than to a centralized state behemoth, his fearless stand before an empire that treated him and his countrymen as less than civilized, his vision of education that would train the hand, the heart and the mind, his involvement of women in public life, his re-interpretation of religious texts to answer to current needs, his fidelity to his inner voice rather than follow any objective standard blindly—all this, in my view, marks him out as a true postmodern. This paper does not go further in defending this view, nor is it meant to. But often, a radical transformation in human consciousness is better understood through the life of someone who seems to embody its theory than by dry abstract debates on definitions. Philosophy, after all, is about life—about answering the questions life brings us and about learning how to live as befits humans.

NOTES:

1 Madan Swarup. *An Introductory Guide to Post-Structuralism and Postmodernism* (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf. 1993). p. 129.

2 James Beckford. "Religion. Modernity and Postmodernity." in B.R. Wilson (ed.). *Religion: Contemporary Issues* (London: Bellew. 1992). pp. 11-27.

3 *Ibid.*

4 Charles Lemart. *Postmodernism is Not What You Think* (Malden. MA & Oxford: Blackwell. 1997).

5 Ibid.. p. 26.

6 Ibid.. p. 26-27.

7 Ibid.. p.31.

8 Ibid.. p.31.

9 Lemert. p. 39.

10 Quoted in Lemert. p.40.

11 Swarup. pp. 130-135.

12 Ibid.. p.35.

13 Ibid.. p.32.

14 Ibid.. p.22.

15 David S. Toolan. "Praying in a Post-Einsteinian Universe." *Cross Currents*, 46. 4 (Winter 1996/97). pp. 437-470. The article speaks of the mind-boggling data pouring in about the universe. how they change our perception of the world and of our place in it. and raises questions about how we believe and pray with this new cosmology.

16 I add that qualifier. "as postmodernist critics would describe it." because any description of a whole period of human history is necessarily selective and one-sided. In this case. moreover. the reference is largely from a Western academic setting of today that is mostly aware of the history of Western civilization—and those parts of the rest of the world that Westerners came into contact with. In fact. in this whole discussion. as in many other academic fora. the question must be raised: Whose world are we taking about? Who is the modern person intended here? How much of. say. India. came under the label "modern" and how much of it would come under the label "postmodern"? Do we even bother to find out whether the division of history into pre-modern (medieval). modern and postmodern from a European point of view would fit other civilizations. e.g.. China?

17 James B. Miller. "The Emerging Postmodern World." in Frederic B. Burnham (ed.). *Postmodern Theology: Christian Faith in a Pluralistic World* (New York: HarperSanFrancisco. 1989). pp.3-5.

18 Lemart. p. 33.

19 The West was evidently aware of a *pre-modern* world that had preceded the arrival of Descartes. Kant and Newton. It was a world dominated by tradition. religious authority (in the case of much of Europe. the church). the separation of celestial and terrestrial spheres. and a vision of the world where the earth and we humans were at the centre. See Miller. p.2.

20 Diogenes Allen. "Christian Values in a Post-Christian Context." in Burnham. op.cit.. pp. 20-36.

21 Allen. p.. 24.

22 See Lyotard's book quoted above.

23 6It is here precisely that contributions like those of Gadamer and Harbermas become relevant. They not only critique previous theories. but also expose the ideologies hidden behind apparently neutral intellectual positions. I must. however. add another caveat at once: Each one is more aware of the conditioning that limit's another's vision more than what restricts one's own. Thus we have Gadamer's critique of Marx and Habermas's critique of Gadamer: Habermas. in turn. is challenged by Paul Ricoeur. and so it goes. The story never ends. For a brief presentation of Habermas's position. including his critique of Gadmer. as well as Ricoeur's criticism of Habermas. see: Jose Pereppaden. "Habermas's Philosophy of Liberation." *Journal of Dharma.* XXII. 1 (January-March 1997). pp. 74-85.

24 Lemert. p. 22.

25 A number of its detractors are mentioned in Gnana Robinson. "Everything Sufficiently Explained? Postmodern: AProblem of the West." in *Indian Theological Studies. ....pp.185-193.*

26 See. for example. the articles of Diogenes Allen. George A. Lindbeck and Robert N. Bellah in Burnham. op.cit.

27 An example would be: Ernest Gellner. *Postmodernism. Reason and Religion* (London: Routledge. 1992). Particularly intriguing are Gellner's remarks on Islam. Two examples of postmodern Christian theology. taken at random. would be: Charles E. Winquist. *Desiring Theology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 1995) and Robert P. Scharlemann. *The Reason of Following: Christology and the Ecstatic I* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 1991).

28 Robert Hollinger. *Postmodernism and the Social Sciences* (London & New Delhi: Sage Publications. 1994). pp. 169-177.

29 Lemert. p. 53.

30 Philip Sheldrake. *Spirituality and Theology* (Maryknoll. NY: Orbis Books. 1998). p. 9.

31 Ibid.

32 J.-F. Lyotard. *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (Manchester: Manchester University Press. 1984). The French original appeared in 1979.

33 J. Derrida. *Of Grammatology* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins Unversity Press. 1976): *Speech and Phenomena. and Other Essays on Husserl's Theory of Signs* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press. 1973): *Writing and Difference* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul. 1978).

34 For a concise and a reasonably clear introduction to postmodernism and to other intellectual currents usually associated with it. see: Madan Sarup. *An Introductory Guide to Post-Structuralism and Postmodernism,*second edition (New York and London: Harvester Wheatsheaf. 1993). It covers all the "big names" and key issues linked to these movements (Jacques Lacan and psychoanalysis. Jacques Derrida and deconstruction. Michel Foucault and the social sciences. Louis Althusser. Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari. Jean-Francois Lyotard and postmodernism. the feminist theories of Helene Cixous. Luce Irigaray and Julia Kristeva. Jean Baudrillard's brand of neo-Marxism).

35 Richard Grigg in *Religious Studies Review.* 23. 1 (January 1997). p.33.

11

HORKHEIMER AND THE MORALITY QUESTION

RAVINDRA M. SINGH

I Wish to begin my discussion of Horkheimer's work by first elaborating on my reasons for making such a choice. Firstly, it is an undisputed fact that it is during Horkheimer's directorship in the 1930s that the Institute for Social Research at Frankfurt came into prominence and made significant contributions to the development of critical social theory. It is under Horkheimer's leadership that the first fundamental shift in the focus of the institute took place. We may note here that the earlier program of the Institute developed under the directorship of Carl Grunberg was chiefly focused on the conventional Marxist preoccupations like the study of labour movements, political economy, Soviet economic planning, etc. Secondly, the much popularized discourse ethics of Horkheimer has tended to give the impression as if the early critical theory suffered from some kind of "ethics deficit".[1] Lastly, Horkheimer's work provide us with the classical formulation of critical theory while recognizing its fluid character. With this background in mind, I have taken up for discussion Horkheimer's problematization of the morality question and his idea of critical theory that emerges from such an engagement. That the morality question played a decisive role in his thinking is evident not only from his mature writings, but Horkheimer's concern with morality is also discernible from the topic of his early dissertation on "the relation between teleology and the capacity for normative judgment".

Horkheimer begins his own reflections on morality by critiquing inadequacies of idealist moral philosophies dealing with rationally justifiable precepts for action. As is common knowledge.

these philosophies are universalist in natue because for them the moral as rational is inseparable from the universal. According to Horkheimer, Idealist moral philosophies are inadequate because they attempt at establishing rules of moral conduct which are appropriate for all times, i.e. rules which have unconditional validity. The problem with these attempts is that such an unconditionality is secured at the cost of severing all contact with real life conditions. But this amounts to overlooking the crucial fact that if the moral law is incommensurable with the real people, there is no point in having a moral philosophy. According to Horkheimer "the modern problem of morality in its essentials has its roots in the bourgeois order... (which) found its purest expression in Kant's formulation of the categorical imperative"[2].

That Kant's formulation is problematic in nature is evident from the fact that while Kant works out his imperative as if real conditions of life do not matter, individuals are required to act in these very conditions. The consequences of this paradoxical situation are not far to seek. Firstly, "it shifts the burden of deep-seated social tensions to the site of the individual conscience"[3] That is, the individual as the isolated subject is provided no way of the inner struggle between self-interest and general interest. Secondly, "because reason posits no substantive goals, all affects are equally removed from its governance".[4] And for *this reason it is quite incapable of "morally motivating action; from it* flows at worst the coy enticement of pure ability to command".[5] That is, desire for power for its own sake.

It is owing to this problematic formulation of the categorical imperative that the reasons for action always remain obscure to the moral agent in the Kantian sense. "The agent knows neither why the universal should stand above the particular, nor how to correctly reconcile the two in any given instance".[6] There is thus a permanent tension between extreme individualism characteristic of the bourgeois period, which finds expression in promotion of *individual advantage, and the social context involving others where* these aspirations are realized. There are problems not only with realization of personal interest, but even the attempt at setting aside real life conditions of society remains problematic. What Kant seems to ignore in his formulation is the importatnt fact that 'even in the most refined and seemingly remote impulses of the individual, the function he performs in society still makes itself felt". [7]

Kant's formulation becomes problematic because he undermines the fact that the idea that we autonomously decide the value of our actions is a vey late historical phenomenon. He undermines such an *important historical fact because the sphere of law,* religion and

culture are understood by him as " projections of the autonomous peron... (as) the fundamental modes of activity of the spontaneous ego"[8]. Moreover, while a great majority of us continue to believe that we act autonomously or take independent decisions in life, this capacity is exercised on a much smaller scale than we are readily willing to admit. Our conduct has undoubtedly been refined in many ways but most human beings continue to be quite inflexible in choice of their aims in life. In case of historically and socially significant situations individual choices are even more in conformity with predispositions of their social group. In real life situations, the individual choice is found to be more frequently exercised in trivial and private matters, though even here the actual exercise of autonomous decision making is much less than one is inclined to suppose.

The capaicty to bring to clear consciousness our predispositions and preferred action patterns and to make oneself choose otherwise on rational grounds is also far less in practice than is assumed even in the case of members of certain privileged strata of society who are otherwise celebrated for their refinement and sophistication. The commitment to apply intellectual prowess that we acquire as part of our professional training to decipher our own conduct and delineate motives guiding our actions, whether public or private, is indeed quite a rare occurrence.

According to Horkheimer, the gap between the imperative and humanity, between formal autonomy of the subject and the actual reality are unbridgeable in Kant and a permanent tension between finite individuals and the infinite self with which they are endowed persists. This turns his notion of the autonpmous subject into a paradox because " it comes to be incorporated in the causality of the phenomenal world that is incompatible with the Kantian concept of freedom".[9] Kant's formalistic intentions even undermine the value of his notion of freedom because by makng freedom unavoidable, he turns it into obedience, an unavoidable compulsion. Accordingly in the *Critique of Practical Reason*, we have "will's submission to the law"[10] which degrades freedom into coercion. Moreover, freedom can be visualized only with reference to " concrete form of a specific unfreedom",[11] something which is missing in Kant's account.

The problem with Kant's moral philosophy seems to be that its avowed aim of deployment of individual energies for human well being cannot be achieved through the purity of inner life alone. The changes then would have to be brought about in the outer world such that the larger aim of general welfare of society is ensured. Though the individual sense of sacrifice, commitment, etc. are not without significance, but what matters most is the objective towards which

these dispositions are directed. Such individual characteristics are laudable only when they promote larger social well being than in themselves as the context of all human actions is social. What is crucial for human well being is not "whether the individuals consider their action(s) to be reconcilable with the natural law of the general welfare, but rather the extent to which it is actually reconcilabe with it".[12] There is thus no guarantee that if all is well with the spirit, the same will be true of entire society.

In the Kantian context the crucial issue is that " if people want to act in such a way that their maxims are fit to become universal law, (then) they must bring about an order in which this intention... can really be carried out according to criteria".[13] Society would then have to be organised in a manner that individual interest and interests of other members of society can be non-antagonistically connected. Such aspirations, however, appear quite unrealizable in an era where individual economic advantage is the natural law and life is lived "not under the control of a conscious will but as a natural occurrence... (It) arises blindly, accidentally, and defectively out of the chaotic activity of individuals, industries, and states... (and) expresses itself in the suffering of the majority of human beings".[14] Lost in oneself each individual effects through his "labour the welfare and the misery of others -- and it can never become entirely evident to what extent and for which individuals his labour means the one or the other".[15]

There is also the difficulty of accounting the component of ambiguity in the relation between one's own labour and social considerations in the world characterized by the rule of capital. For Horkheimer, the problem can be solved if society rationally incorporates labour of its members into a directed process. In so far as this is not realized, the problem will persist in society "as a conflict in the inner life of its subjects".[16] Kant's mistake thus seems to be that "instead of pointing toward an era in which human relations will be really governed by reason... (he) betokens outmoded stages of society in which all processes were mediated simply by instinct, tradition, and obedience".[17]

For Horkheimer morality as epitomized in the Kantian imperative emerges with the rise of bourgeois society and is bound to loose its prominence with its decline. If so rendered, Kantian morality turns out to be the mark of bourgeois consciousness and is indicative of Kant's failure to account for our embeddedness in history. Horkheimer justifies such a reading of Kantian morality on the ground that it has very little in common either with the early ethics of the Greeks which was directed towards pleasure and happiness or with the religious ethics of the middle ages which was primarily

directed towards spiritual salvation. Horkheimer's contention is that once freed from obedience to authority (of the church) the bourgeoisie needed moral doctrines to regulate their behaviour towards each other".[18] Kant's moral philosophy is accordingly an expression of idealism's attempt at masquerading it ideological agenda in the name of reason.

The critical theory that Horkheimer proposes cannot thus be founded on such a morality. The former as the project of transcendence cannot rest on that which is to be transcended. What is, however, important is the fact that while morality does not have any constitutive role in Horkheimer's thinking, it is not dismissed as mere false consciousness either. This allows Horkheimer to escape ideological reductionism so very typical of the sociology of knowledge popularized by karl Mannheim.

In the present context, morality is thus thought by Horkheimer as an articulation specific to certain social relations characterized by injustice, exploitation, oppression, etc., He thematizes morality from the standpoint of historical contingency and rejects "metaphysically grounded morality".[19] He does this because his predominant concern is with identifying forces which shape our consciousness. It is for this reason that morality as a social problem requires a social response which is characterized by Horkheimer" as the effective incorporation of individuals into collective decision - making processes'.[20] It has no transcendent authority. "There is no eternal realm of values".[21] Morality, for Horkheimer, in its modern versions is a historical phenomena and needs "to be understood in historical terms".[22]

The thesis that morality is necessarily colored by the social milieu of its origins is demonstrated by Horkheimer by taking examples from none other than Kant's own writings. For example, marriage is described by Kant as the "Joining together of two people of the opposites sex for the lifelong natural *ownership* of their sexual attributes".[23] Kant also "speaks of the 'equality of *possessions*" of the married couple not m,erely in terms of material goods. but also in terms of two people who mutually *own* each other".[24] The overpowering influence on Kant of the category of property popularized in his day by the bourgeoisis is only too obvious to require any further elaboration.

After offering a rigorous critique of the idealist renderings of the morality question of which Kant's formulation is only an example. Horkheimer proposes his alternative conception on materialist lines which

> "sees in morality an expression of life of determinative individuals and seeks to understand it in terms of the conditions of its emergence and passing, not for the sake of truth in itself

but rather in connection with deteminate historical forces. It understands itself as the theoretical aspect of efforts to abolish existing misery... Materialism preserves no transhistorical authority behind morality... The concequences of all human actions work themselves out exclusively in the spatiotemporal world. As long as they have no effects on their author in this world, he has nothing to fear from them".[25]

In light of the above formulation and the preceding critique of the Kantian moral philosophy, Horkheimer thus needs to be granted that it is not possible to have morality for all times to come in advance. Any attempt at formulating a theory of morality must take into consideration not only the larger human concerns of justice and equality but also historical specificities. This has to be granted for two reasons. Firstly, in the context of critical theory in particular and in light of our existing empirical knowledge of nature and society it is an established fact that "even concepts abstract enough to seem to approach invariance prove to be historic".[26] Secondly, acceptance of historical situatedness of our being and knowledge is not incompatible with the visualization of possibilities of transcending the present situation.

A morality based on the historical situatedness of the individual and society is one of the better ways out of our present predicament because moralities emphasizing free will, as well as those advocating determinism, have proved to be problematic. We can object to the first on the ground that it "burdens the dependent individuals with the social injustice they can do nothing about... It ceaselessly humiliates them with desiderata they cannot fulfill".[27] The latter option is objectionable on the ground that it "amounts to a metaphysically extended rule of the status quo" and proclaims the existing inequalities as immutable.[28]

Given this formulation of the morality question, the other important issues that we need to take up for consideration are : (i) how to make sense of Horkheimer's own concern with morality? That is, how is it to be made intelligible ? How is it to be grounded? (ii) whether Horkheimer is willing to grant anything specific to morality or not? That is, whether our concern for morality has some specific nature of its own or whether it is a *mere* expression, expression it any way is, of some other more fundamental processes in society?

As regards the grounding of morality, Horkheimer believes that it admits of no grounding.[29] In fact he goes to the extent of stating that "not a single value admits of a purely theoretical grounding".[30] He holds this for two reasons. Firstly, for him, none of our actions

can "proceed with necessity from some ultimate or absolute position".[31] Secondly, morality as human striving for happiness and "abolition of social injustice"[32] is "to be recognised as a natural fact requiring no justification".[33] Nor is it amenable to justification.[34] Horkheimer admits of a lack of justification for morality because he considers ultimate justifications of actions to be not only illusory but even ideological in nature. He holds such a position because unlike traditional theory which in his view propagates illusions of objectivity and value-neutrality, Horkheimer's proposed critical theory accepts its situatedness in concrete life conditions and is "consciously biased".[35]

Coming to the nature of moral sentiment, we find Horkheimer identifying it with an interest which is distinct both from the natural law as well as desire for private possessions. It points towards love whereby love is meant an urge for a happy humanity. "To all .. it wishes the free development of their creative powers.... (it appears to it that) all living beings have a claim to happiness... Not the rod of the corporal but the climax of the Ninth Symphony is the expressioon of moral sentiment".[36] Horkheimer thus tries to steer clear of utopianism by admitting of nothing beyond the anticipation of a liberated and happy humanity. In our own times this anticipation takes the form of compassion and "recognises itself in the suffering other".[37] For Horkheimer, compassion is not a mere emotion but it is thought of as "the sensuous consciousness of the identity of general and particualar".[38]

This brings me to the consideration of some of the difficulties in Horkheimer's thinking. The first difficulty is presented by the above mentioned notion of the interest in the well being of humanity. It is quite clear from Horkheimer's formulation that the notion of interest by being grounded in real socio-historical conditions does not have the status of a principle in Horkheimer's thinking. This means that it involves constant appraisal of the situation and the possibility of it radical undergoing changes in light of fresh information cannot be a priori ruled out. This seems to amount to placing materialist moral philosophy on very shaky foundation. This, however, appears quite unavoidable in so far as for materialism all moral principles have to be historically grounded. Horkheimer himself appears to be aware of this when he states that "in materialist theory, the main point is not to maintin concepts unchanged but to improve the lot of humanity".[39] Secondly, while Horkheimer's concern for deabsolutizing certain objectionable features of the classical critique of reason is well taken, there are certain difficulties with "Horkheimer's jump from the absence of *pure* rational... motivations for morality to the absence of *any* rational justification of its basic commands".[40]

The other set of difficulties seem to arise from certain passages in Horkheimer's writings which tends to undermine his own call for radical transformation of society on just lines. For example,

at one place Horkheimer states that the desire for a planned society on rational lines "is really innated in every man".[41] Such passages undermine Horkheimer's own attempts at changing the society by limiting the role of human initiative. In fact such passages become all the more problematic and embrassing in the absence of any discernible revolutionary forces in society. The problem is further compounded by the fact that Horkheimer gives no clear idea of how marginalized sections of society can be involved in decision making affecting their individual and collective lives. This is, however, not to say that Horkheimer's work precludes appropriate recasting of his thought, but to recognise such a need in our changed situation. Such an undertaking may also be quite in line with this much neglected and almost forgotten thinker of our times who not only coined the term 'critical theory' but earned it the reputation that it enjoys today.

NOTES

1. Schnadelback (1994), 240.
2. Horkheimer (1993). 18.
3. Hoy and McCarthy (1994), 24.
4. Horkheimer and Adorno (1973), 89.
5. Schnadelback (1994). 248.
6. Horkheimer (1993). 18-19.
7. *Ibid,* 19.
8. *Ibid,* 2.
9. Adorno (1993), 232.
10. *Ibid.*
11. *Ibid,* 231
12. Horkheimer (1993) 24.
13. *Ibid,* 25.
14. *Ibid,* 20.
15. *Ibid.*
16. *Ibid.*
17. *Ibid,* 28.
18. Strik (1992). 26.
19. Horkheimer (1972). 44.
20. Hoy and McCarthy (1994). 24.
21. Horkheimer (1993) 33.
22. Hoy and McCarthy (1994) 24.
23. Kant. 277. Cited in Horkheimer (1993). 34.
24. Horkheimer (1993). 34.
25. *Ibid,* 32.
26. Adorno (1973) . 262.

27. *Ibid.* 263.

28. *Ibid.*

29. Horkheimer (1993). 33.

30. *Ibid.* 45.

31. Horkheimer (1972). 43.

32. *Ibid.* 242.

33. *Ibid.* 44.

34. Strik (1992). 177.

35. Horkheimer (1993). 47 That the acceptance of positionality thesis does not amount to surrendering claims to objectivity has increasingly been acknowledged even outside critical theory. See. for example. Sen (1993).

36. Horkheimer (1993). 34-35.

37. Schnadelback (1994). 249.

38. Horkheimer and Adorno (1973). 101.

39. Horkheimer (1993). 37.

40. Hoy and McCarthy (1994). 14 & 27.

41. Horkheimer (1972). 251.

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12

A DISCOURSE ON THE LANGUAGE OF LOGIC

CHINMOY GOSWAMI

How long can you know life from books?
Does the heart weepover a printed page ?
Did you not love the author from his work?
Then did you love the man or the text?

The text is the man - *Merchant* [1]

It has been thoroughly argued and by now quite convincingly established that a discourse revolves round a text, written or spoken. A discourse, a body of sentences, circle round some statements, explicit or implicit. A statement is not merely an assembly of signs but a lot more. A proposition or a sentence may be regarded as a finite sequence of signs, phonemic or scriptural. A statement is an indefinite assembly of sentences, said and unsaid. In this context, it can very well be claimed that the archieves of the Western philosophical discourse is distributed around *Le Livre,* called *The Elements* allegedly composed by Euclid (3rd Century B.C.) It will not be an exaggeration to claim that all major philosophical eruptions in the West had mathematics as its epicentre. In other words, one can characterize all major philosophical ideas that took shape on the European soil as Philosophies of Mathematics. Pythagorean belief in the reality of numbers to Kronnecker's dictum – Dear Lord made the whole numbers, everything else is man made.[2] spanning over two thousand years has been the recurrent underlying theme for philosophy. From Plato's banner on the gates of his Academy to Foucault's anecdote, how a Japanese king became all too powerful after taking lessons in mathematics from an European trader[3] are testimonies to the fact

that the intellectual tradition in Europe has always been under the burden of mathematical thinking. The western philosophers did not have to say this in any explicit terms as this fact has been implicit in 'every statement that was made. even in the realm of philosophy. The ability to put the ideas in the language of mathematics seemed to be the penultimate goal for almost all disciplines except perhaps language learning. Often it was aired that the Great Book of Nature is perhaps written in the language of mathematics. In this context mathematics has been referred to as the "Queen of all Science" following the analogy of Leibniz's Queen Monad. Consequently, philosophy as philosophy of mathematics enjoyed a dignified status even among the non philosophers. However, there is a growing trend to identify mathematics as the servant of science and consequently. philosophy is playing a second fiddle to the growing popularity of the natural sciences.[4] In India, however, it may be pointed out that philosophical discourse blossomed around the garden called *Astadhyayi* allegedly due to Panini. It may not not be a hyperbolic imagination or mer fictition to characterize the entire gamut of classical Indian philosophical tradition as adventures in philosophy of language. This characterization of the East and the West as philosophers of language and philosophers of mathematics may not be easily palatable to those who are as Macauley wanted them to be, as early as 1835, a member of the "class of persons, Indian in blood and colour but English in taste, in opinions. in morals."[5]

However, thee is a discomfiture with the terminology itself. Philosophy, being a human product. is in need of an author,. An authorless philosophy is inconceivable. Authority and authorship is intrinsic to any philosophical activity. Philosophies, like philosophy of mathematics or philosophy of language fail to locate their author and consequently may be viewed as illegitimate off-springs. a burden on the philosophical state exchequer. There can obviously be a philosophy of Nagarjun or that of Kant. where the authorship is stamped on them. But what does the phrase "philosophy of mathematics" signify? Was there an author called mathematics who wrote philosophical texts? To cut the story short. what I intend to say is that the incomplete phrase " philosophy of ...." can only the prefixed to a proper name. Any attempt to violet this simple grammatical rule gives rise to an unmanageable inflation in the semantic domain. We may land up with philosophy of any thing whatsoever. Nothing can prevent us from using phrases like "philosophy of an automobile" or "philosophy of horses". The point is that it is difficult. perhaps impossible. to formulate a consistent semantical network for the phrase philosophy of ..." when we do not have the required machinery to control the inflation. However. to think consistently is not at all a necessary condtion for doing philosophy in India.[6] We Indians

may continue to smuggle foreign ideas even during the days of open market economy. The has become the language of the academics and the academicians in india.

Language, during the last century, has received a significant amount of attention in the Western academic world. Different dimensions of language are being excavated and new findings are being added to the discourses on language. These discoveries and excavations have paved the way for a kind of inflationary race in the domain of semantics so far as the word language is concerned. We not only have English, Hindi, Telugu, Tamil etc, as samples of language but we also have body language, language of love, feminist language, language of protest and even language of silence. What seems to be of utmost significance in this semantical cacophony is the fact that language is associated not only with cultural or geographical boundaries but also with human activities. We have a language corresponding to almost every human acitivity . There is a growing recognition of the fact that language use and human activities are closely connected. Using language is an act; doing something is also communicating something. Doing and saying have become coterminal[7] Phrases like "Speech Acts" or "Communicative Actions" are only pointers towards this coterminality. "How to do Things with Words? " is no more to be construed as a query but as an affirmation. In other words, every human activity is trapped in a communal web. A purely secular use of language is not only forbidden but is also inconceivable.

It is obvious that language is in high demand. Books are written in some language. We need to write papers for our carrier advancements, present them in seminars and subsequently push them for publication. All these and many more activities are in need of some language. Since language is so much in demand, we need a production machinery as well as a policy for marketing the products. Both the poduction machinery and the policy for marketing are to be formulated in some language. The production machinery for a language may be called its syntax while the marketing policies associated with it may be termed as its semantics. It has been quite well known through the works of Quine, Kuhn and many others that a particular syntactic structure may be connected to alternative, even incommensurable, interpretations. There are non-categorical theories as well. Similarly; for a particular semantic field, there may be alternative syntactical structures. This posibility of many-to-many correspondence between syntax and semantics raises the serious problem regarding identification of any language. Suppose that there is a syntactic structure S for which we have three alternative,

interpretations, semantical networks. M_1, M_2 and M_3. One may ask the question–whether we have only one language or three different languages? The opinion is divided on the issue. For example, Chomsky may prefer to identify languages in terms of their syntax. the production machinery while Wittgenstein surely would prefer to identity language in terms of its "rules of projection",[8] "usability". The same question may be asked when the situation is the other way round, that is alternative syntactical structures are available to characterize the same semantic field. It is very unlikely that we will get any definite answer. The problem really arises because, we have been trained to think about language in a particular way, in terms of production and distribution of a finished product. Such a view of language emerged in Greece and has been perpetuated in Europe for all these years. One of the significant reasons for the survival of such a lopsided view of language for such a long period of time is the pedagogic interest. The primary concern beneath theorizing on language has been loaded with the concern for its marketability - how to teach the silver tongue to the barbarians (natives) of the newly acquired colonies.[9] Consequently, theorizing on language quite candidly displayed the power relation among the users of the language - high low, native - non-native, Parisian-non-Parisian etc.,

As long as we are allowed to speak in some vague ways, incorporating metaphors and myths in our speech, we can neither ask for an objective and universal mode of speech nor that of understanding. Moverover, if it is speech, in the literal sense of the term, we are dealing with a very slippery substance. A discourse in such a language has the perennial danger of eventually terminating in either "I did not mean it" or "You could not understand me" depending on the power relation between the speaker and the listener, among the participants. For a serious discourse, in a democratic set up, it is assumed that use of such phrases as "I did not mean it" or "You could not understand me" are signs of corrupt practices. Consequently, for an effective governance of a serious discourse, European intellectuals had been struggling hard to find an effective mechanism to weed out the corrupt practices. The only plausible way at the beginning seemed to be to excavate the foundations of all such discourses. It was also decided by a common consensus that if the search fails then a foundation has to be built. Only a firm foundation can rule out corruption, can provide absolute objectivity to the discourse and hence raises the possibility of achieving the common objectives.[10] One significant point to be noted here is that the project of modernism was laid down keeping the model of geometry, the science of space, in the background. A space, and

there was only one space, was viewed as a continous medium. But by the time even the most rudimentary drafts were being prepared on the modernist program, the emphasis shifted to arithmetic, a punctuated space. The shift of emphasis from geometry to arithmetic as a route to foundation paved the way for logic to carry out the modernist program, in the form of Dedekind, Poincare and Cantor. For discourse could not be represented in terms of geometric figures only, if needed the punctuations. A discourse is not a continuous process but rather a succession of events. A discourse is always punctuated. More interestingly, the shift of emphasis to arithmetic provided an easy access to an already available script. As we all know, from our first lessons in English, that the assumption behind language teaching has been scriptural rather than phonemic, we learnt the alphabtes first and then the words or sentences. The bias towards script over phonemes in the Western thinking owing to the pedagogic interest as mentioned earlier, received a further boost through the Renaissance model of nature as *The Book,* which can be read provided one knows the script. Since reading and not listening has been the primary medium of communication (for the theorists) under which the seeds of modernism was planted, it was necessary to find or evolve an adequate script in which the accounts could be maintained, drafts could be prepared, treaties could be signed, documents could be preserved for the futurity. The first draft of the final document for this purpose was prepared by Frege (1883) which took its final shape in Hilbert (1922).: "The goal of my theory is to establish once for all the certitude of mathematical methods ... If mathematical thinking is defective where are to find truth and certitute."[11] Hilbert succeeded in axiomatizing Euclidean geometry. Encouraged by his success, he expressed the universality of his method, which is usually known as the Proof Theory. That is, the entire collection of true sentences, though infinite in number, can be derived from a finite set of axioms with the help of a finite set of rules. In other words, the entire domain of knowledge can be put under the control of only a chosen few. The document ran into a rough weather from the very beginning. Russell's paradox shook both Frege and Cantor. Even what could be achieved by Hilbert had to pay a considerable price. The entire domain of mathematics which could be provided with the Hilbertian certitude turned out to be completely devoid of any meaning or marketing prospects. The entire language system turned out to be a mere play with symbols, a game with the meaningless marks. The unprecedented success of modernism immediately met with a devastating disaster, at least in the real of logic. We have a beautiful foundation but anything built on it is rendered

meaningless, including the foundation itself and thereby the entire enterprise turned out to be devoid of any content, an useless affair. The final nail to the modernist version of logic came from Godel in the form of his much abused but less understood " Incompleteness Theorem" in 1930. Godel's Incompleteness Theorem makes explicit the fact that the modernist program of finding or even inventing an absolute foundation is doomed to failure. Even the arithmetic of natural numbers, so familiar to us from time immemorial, cannot be provided with the requisite foundation. Corruption is incorruptible. As long as we are in the domain of production and distribution, syntax and semantics, the corrupt practices cannot be fully eliminated. For we can always produce a marketable commodity for which we cannot formulate any policy for marketing or distribution. A complete regimentation of the world of language, and for that matter any human domain, is an impossible task, the regimentors cannot be effectively regimented. There can only be relatively small domains under regimentation. It is true that for an effective governance, there has to be a constitution but too much dependence on the constitution which requires a lot of careful reading paves the way for a circle of stagnation. It must be realized that a constitution is an expression of the goals and aspirations of a community. But when the only goal becomes how to uphold the constitution it produces a circle of vested interest which guarantees movements against the spirit of the constitution. This is the lesson that we have learnt from our inherited modernity.

Logicians have not only learnt the lessons by heart but also have moved forward towards what may be called Model Theory in contrast to Proof Theory. In Model Theory the emphasis, from the very beginning is on models, logicians counterpart for meaning truth. It is understanding that assumes larger significance than mere syntactical exercises. The production machinery becomes subservient to the marketing policies. One of the starling results in model theory is due to Skolem and Towenheim. One of the Towenheim - Skolem Theorems (downward) states that if a first order theory is consistent then it has a countable model. The contents of this theorem is quite remarkable. The theorem informs us that every consistent theory, even if it is of an uncountable domain, has a countable model. In particular, we know due to Cantor, that the set of real numbers R is an uncountable set. The Lowenheim-Skolem theorem states that a consistent theory of R must have a countable model. That is, the true sentences in R are also true in the set of natural numbers N. If a theory of R has a countable model, N, then R cannot be regarded as uncountable. This is known as the Skolem paradox, an uncountable set is not

uncountable. This leads us to believe that the notion of countable is not an absolute concept rather it depends explicity on the theory at hand. A possible explanation is obtained by sharply distinguishing between the object language and the metalanguage as is the case with most of the semantical paradoxes. The set of real numbers in the model is indeed countable and therefore there is a bijection from R to N. But this bijection is not in the model. Thus this does not contradict Cantor's theorem that R has a greater cardinality than N. This startling result, even in the form of a paradox, sends the clear message that truth can only emerge through ruptures and not through continous flows. The fact that ruptures are essential ingredients of any is an old discovery and dates back to zero if not Heraclitus. The famous (notorious) paradoxes due to Zero are pointers to the fact that there cannot be any ruptureless discourse, a continuous flow of discourse is a myth. A prolonged absence of any violet ruptures may lead us to believe in the myth of a continuous discursive practice. A discourse without any ruptures is not even a discourse but merely a stagnation, at the ost there may be ripples on the surface. It may be noted that by doing something we bring about a transformation in the existing state of affairs. When we do the usual things, we bring out null transformation to the existing state of affairs, that is, inaction, Similarly, a discourse without any ruptures is mere repetetions of the same course. But this myth, despite Zeno and many others, has kept the European intellectuals under its spell. The entire Book of Nature, a completed and finished product seemed to be a continous whole.

It is quite interesting to see that despite startling results from the domain of logic, "Books have too long done our thinking, our seeing, our very living for us, interposing a second hand authority between ourselves and the innocence of immediate being."[12] But as Lyotard points out "Simulation has always been the case. From Plato and the Sophists down to Regan and Prime TV ... All societies rely on ruses to maintain legitimacy, rituals to position subjects and rhetoric to stabilize a communal representational world that assumes the continuity of a shared phenomenal relity. Images have always sustained and produced power."[13] Under the spell of power relation that exists in the Indian academic society, we will continue to have these rituals of organizing seminars to position the participants. To conclude, I only wish that Rorty might turn out to be wrong some day though at present I only share Rorty's apprehensions: "Perhaps philosophy will become highly edifying so that one's self identification as a philosopher will be purely it terms of the books that one reads and discusses rather than in terms of the problems one wishes to solve."[14].

NOTES

1. Merchant. Hoshang. *The Home, The Friend and The World.* A writers' Workshop. Calcutta, 1995. p. 36.

2. Quoted in Meschkowski H. - *Evolution of Mathematical Thought.* Holden-Day. 1965. p.55. In the foot note to this we find. "In this work. 'the dear Lord' is listed in the index of authors.

3. Foucault M. "Discourse on Language ". reprinted in his *Archaeology of Knowledge.* Pantheon Books. 1972. pp 215 - 237.

4. Carnap R. *Logical Structure of the world.*

5. Macauley. Thomas Rabington "Minutes on Education". Report on education policy sent to the British Parliament from India for consideration in 1835.

6. Compare Chattopadhyaya. D.P. *History, Society and Polity.* Macmillan 1976with Rao. A.P.. "On Trading Philosophy". reprinted in his *Politics of Philosophy.* Ajanta. New Delhi. 1983: Rao's article was prevented from publication in 1976. Also compare Daya Krishna - "Vedanta in the First Millennium A.D.". *JICPR.* 1986 with Suresh Chandra. "An Illusive Histiriography". JICPR 1997. pp. 123 - 133.

7. For a more detailed account pertaining to the coterminality between action and speech see Goswami. C. - "On Understanding Human Action". in Jhanji R. (ed.). *Knowledge, Culture, Action,* Ajanta.New Delhi. 1994. pp 287 - 310.

8. Rao A.P.. "Wittgenstein : A Second Look". JJCPR.

9. Harris R. - *The Language Makers,* Cornell Univ. Pres 1981.

10. The notion of "objectivity" is wrongly connected with either the notion of "object" or that of "consensus". Objectivity is rather objective. goal. aim: purpose oriented See Goswami. C.. "In Quest of Objectivity". JICPR. XII. 1995. pp. 1-12.

11. Hilbert D. "On the Infinite" in Renacerrap. p. and Putnam H. *Philosophy of Mathematics,* Prentice - Hall. 1964. pp. 134-151.

12. Steiner. G. "Text and Context" in his *On Difficulties and Other Essays,* Oxford University Press. 1978. p 10.

13. Lyotard. Jean- Francois. *Driftworks,* New York. 1982.

14. Rorty. R. *Philosophy and Mirror of Nature,* Princeton. 1979. p. 394.

PART II

1

VALIDITY OF KNOWLEDGE ACCORDING TO ŚAIVA SIDDHĀNTA

R. GOPALAKRISHNAN

Śaiva Siddhānta, the accomplished end, has a well balanced epistemology and metaphysics. In fact, its metaphysical doctrines are well established with the help of epistemological principles. This system has a theo-centric epistemology, which is called *aḷavai* (measurement). Even as commodities are *measured through lengthwise, volumewise and weightwise, our knowledge is* measured through divine proponsities as well as human instruments. The Siddhāntin proudly proclaims that those who do not know the *rāga* (melody) may not enjoy the music performance; those who do not know righteous and pure deeds may not know the merit of actions. Similarly, those who are not wellversed in *aḷavai* may not know the fruits of life. Hence, epistemological device becomes inevitable in augmenting one's intellectual enterprises.

Śaiva Siddhānta accepts only three *pramāṇas* (valid means of knowledge) such as *pratyakṣa* (perception), *anumāna* (inference) and *śabda* (verbal testimony). The other *pramāṇas* recognised by the other Indian philosophical systems such as *upamāna* (comparison), *arthāpatti* (presumption) and *anupalabdhi* (non-cognition) are explained in terms of any one or more of the above three *pramāṇas*. However, the view status of independent *pramāṇas* assigned to (i) *pariśeṣa* (elimination) (ii) *aitihya* (tradition), (iii) *sambhava* (subsumption) and (iv) *svabhāvaliṅga* (natural meaning of words) by the Paurāṇikas is refuted by the Siddhāntin who brings these modes of knowledge well within the parameter of the first three *pramāṇas* accepted by him.

The Siddhāntin goes to the extent of saying that even the three *pramāṇas* are only *derivatively* called *pramāṇas*. For at the ultimate analysis only *cit-śakti* (the intelligent energy) of the soul alone is recognised as the valid means of knowledge since it alone is free from doubt, error and remembrance. Perception, inference and verbal testimony serve the cause of *cit-śakti* in illuminating things. Hene they are only treated as auxiliaries and not major

pramāṇas. *Cit -śakti* has threefold function such as like, dislike and indifference. When the *cit-śakti* likes certain things, it involves in it, ignores when it dislikes and is indifferent when it neither likes nor dislikes. Śivajñāna Munivar in his *magnum opus* the *Māpāḍiyam* (commentary to the *Śivajñāna-bodham*) says :

> The soul is the *pramātā* (knower), its intelligence which is intelligence Energy is the *pramāṇa* and the knowledge gained is *pramiti*... while it (the soul) is under the influence of "*asat*", it has *pratyakṣa, anumāna* and *āgama* (which are all *Pāśa-jñāna* and which are different from it), as its manifestor. When it comes under the influence of *sat, śivajñāna* which exists non-different from it is its manifestor. Hence *pratyakṣa, anumāna* and *śabda* as well as *Śivajñāna* are figuratively said to be the *pramāṇas*."[1]

The whole idea may be explained thus: The term '*pramāṇa*' in Śaiva siddhānta has been used in two senses viz., the primary sense and the secondary sense. The former refers to the knowing by the soul of the material objects through its cognitive potency or intelligent energy. The latter refers to the actual knowing of the things with the aids of perception, inference and verbal testimony as the valid means of knowledge.

According to S. Suryanarayana Sastri, the expression *cit-śakti* usually denotes knowledge, rather than the means of knowledge. If *cit-śakti* is itself the instrument what is the name for that which results from the exercise of the instrument? The answer is that *cit-śakti* is both instrument and result, that it has two aspects, as inseparably connected with the self and as turned towards external objects. In the former aspect, it is the result and in the latter aspect the instrument. It is not therefore inappropriate to speak of cit-śakti as the instrument of knowledge.[2]

The Siddhāntins like the Naiyāyikas are of the view that it is the soul that knows. According to the Siddhāntins, the individual soul which is neither *sat* nor *asat* in itself cognises both of them as aids and has its being in them. *Sat* is nothing but the immutable Śiva (the very form of consciousness bliss) while *asat* is the mutable material universe which consists of *tanu* (body), *karaṇa* (organs) *bhuvana* (locus) and *bhoga* (objects of experience). Lord Śiva, the pure *sat* cannot get associated with the impure *asat*. On the contrary, the *asat* too cannot know the *sat*. Hence the soul knows the *asat* by becoming one them and knows *sat* in the same way. Ultimately Siva who makes the soul know and the latter knows through his grace.

Another interesting epistemological feature in Śaiva Siddhānta is about the *cit-śakti* which is functioning both as a *pramāṇa* and *pramātā*. To the question that if the self is the form of intelligence, then *pramāṇa*, *pramātā* and *prameya* are all none other than the self (i.,e., the Siddhāntin himself obliterates the distinction among the three), the Siddhāntin replies that when the

intelligent energy *(cit-śakti)* of the soul, turned towards the world of objects, it becomes a *pramāṇa* and not the knower (pramātā). When the impurities are annihilated, the *cit-śakti 'realizes,'* the Lord and at that time it is *pramātā* (knower) and not *pramāṇa.*

The Siddhāntin goes to the extent of denying *jīva cit śakti* (the intelligent potency of the finite self) as the *pramāṇa* since it cannot cognise Śiva. It suffers from the defect of non-pervasion *(avyāpti)* since śivajñāna alone can cognize both objects and Śiva. In that case Śiva cannot become a *prameya* (object of knowledge) for *jīva cit śakti*, since *śivajñāna* illumines both objects and Śiva. It also is subjected to the defect of over pervasion *(ativyāpti)* since *pramāṇa* cannot become *prameya* and in that case Śiva too would become a *pramāṇa. Jīva cit śakti* suffers from another defect of inapplicability *(asambhava)* since it cannot know śiva by itself. "Though the soul is eternal, pervasive and of the nature of intelligence, even after the removal of its impurity, it cannot know itself, the Lord and the *pāśa* (bonds) unless it is formed by Śivajñāna. A Jīva cit-śakti is subject to the defects of non-pervasion, over pervasion and inapplicability, we have to consider *Śiva cit-sakti* alone to be the sole pramana for the soul, alike in tis bound and free states. Śivāgrayogin quotes the *Pauṣkara Āgama* to the effect that informed by Śiva cit-śakti which illuminates like the sun, the soul knows Śiva, His energy, itself and the bonds".[3]

It is Śiva's grace that favours *Jīva cit-śakti* and hence it is the *pramāṇa* that is helped since its defilements are removable. The *prāmaṇa* that helps is Śiva *cit-śakti* which assists in annihilating the delimiting adjunct of the soul which veils the soul's intelligent energy.

The Śivajñānabodham, a famous Śaivite philosophical text, explains the phenomenon of knowing in a beautiful manner: "As the eye has the ability to visualize as it has been destined to see, the self in association with the eye makes it see and in turn it also sees. In the same way, God in union with self makes it know and He Himself knows. When the self knows this gracious gesture rendered by Śiva being in union with the self in advaitic relation, it has the unflinching love which enables it to attain the experience of divine bliss, the sacred feet of God."

Hence certainty of knowledge lies in seeing everything through Śiva's grace, according to Śaiva Siddhānta. If one tries to see everything with his intellectual resources, the resulting effect would be doubt, confusion and falsehood. The Siddhāntin cleverly and carefully incorporates the divine fervour and human endeavours in knowing a phenomenon whether it is empirical or spiritual. However, the authenticity of knowledge lies in resorting to divine modalities. To have more accuracy in the process of knowing, the Siddhāntin believes that the statements found in the Āgamas satisfy certain essential requisites of significant utteance. The Vedas are general and the Āgamas are special, though both of them have been authored by Lord Śiva,

according the Siddhāntin. The Āgamas have three major divisions viz., *tantra mantra* and *upadeśa.*

The *tantra* part of the Āgamas deals with the primary and secondary signification of words as well as the existence of things. The *caryā* and *kriyā* stages of worship are well explained in the above part. The *yoga* stage is explained in the *mantra* part. Postures, breath control etc. enable the aspirant to have a contemplation of the self. In this process he can comprehend meditation, the seer of the hymn, the metre, the presiding deity, the essence of the hymn and the application of the hymn connected with his worship through the *mantra* part of the Āgamas. The *upadeśa* part of the Āgamas refer to the *Jñāna* aspect which deals elaborately with the three realities viz., *pati, paśu* and *pāśa.* A Śaiva Siddhāntin has to know about the independent nature of *pati* (God) and the nature of *paśu* (soul) and *pāśa* (bonds) which are different from *pati.*

In Śaiva Siddhānta certainty of knowledge is based on inclusiveness and harmony. The works of human beings and the Śivāgamas are treated as the one end o the hierarchy and the other end as well. In the words of Professor S.S. Sastri, "It is not possible to say that the Sidhāntin has neglected the aspect of harmony since that necessarily forms part of any intelligible conception of inclusiveness; but he does not appear to have placed that in the foreground of his critical consciousness as much as he ought to have."[4]

The Siddhāntins are of the view that knowledge to be certain and valid must be taken as a whole and not as parts. If parts alone are considered. error and contradiction are bound to take place. Even as the blind men touched each part of the elephant and proclaimed that the elephant was like the part they touched, people proclaim partial validity for the whole truth. The conflict among the philosophical systems is due to the consideration by the part of the Vedas and Āgamas mistaking the part to the whole, in their ignorance. Śaiva Siddhānta attempts to incorporate the truth found in the different systems.

Again, the qualififcation of the person in his spiritual endeavours also counts in determining the validity of knowledge, according to the Siddhāntins. "In so far as the Lord Himself is taken as the author of all systems and works, their differences can be accounted for in terms of the grades of spiritual eligibility of the persons to whom they are intended. Persons are gradually led up from the lower to the higher, the less inclusive to the more inclusive, e.g. the declarations in the Taittirīya. "Annamaya Kośa is Brahman'. "Prāṇamaya Kośa is Brahman" etc. It is like holding grass before cows to catch them' as the *Sūta Saṁhitā* has it. A person's interest is arrested by something he can understand and then he is led forward. These considerations, involved in claiming the Siddhānta as the highest truth, show that not mere inclusiveness but harmony also is in the foreground of the Siddhāntin's consciousness. Inclusiveness and harmony are the essential features of coherence and so we can sum up the Siddhāntin's theory

of truth in one word as coherence." Hence, according to the Siddhāntin, certainty of knowledge lies in comprending the reality in a comprehensive way.

Since the self is incapable of knowing anything without the aid of Śiva's grace, it is postulated that *Śiva-śakti* or *Īśvara cit-śakti* is the *pramāṇa* in the real sense and this approach gives room for the *sāmānyalakṣaṇa* of *pramāṇa* in Śaiva Siddhānta. Only by secondary usage (*upacāra) ātma cit-śakti* is treated as *pramāṇa* because of its inseparable association with *Śiva-śakti*. *Ātma-cit-śakti* is considered as a *pramā* in the sense of *sāmīpya - lakṣaṇa Upakāraka lakṣaṇa* i.e., Śiva is the *Upakāraka* (helper) and the self is the *upakārya* (helped). Ultimately Śiva is the *pramā* in Śaiva Siddhānta in both the bound and liberated states of the soul. At the same time, He becomes the *prameya* for the self in the 'liberated' state.

While concluding, it may be said that the Siddhāntin believes in the efficacy of Siva's grace which alone makes the certitude of knowledge. To quote K. Sivaraman, "Śaiva Siddhānta adheres in its 'transcendental' epistemology to the distinction between consciousness which is meta-judgemental, and is the inalienable essence of self, and knowledge in the sense of judgement or content cognition, which belongs to self through self's identification with the model operation of intellect."

NOTES

1. V.A. Devasenapathi. *Saiva Siddhanta*. University of Madras. p.18
2. *Indian Philosophical Annual*, University of Madras. Vol. 14. p.85
3. Devasenapathi *op. cit.* p.20
4. *Ibid.*. p.50
5. *Ibid.*, p.51
6. *Śaivism in a Philosophical Perspective*, Motilal Banarsidas. p. 336.

2

THE IDEAL OF SWARAJ AND A CRITIQUE OF MODERNITY

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"For years, it may be for generations, patriotic and loyal Indians have dreamt of Swaraj for their mother land. Today you have the beginnings for Swaraj within my Empire, and widest scope and ample opportunity for progress to the liberty which my other dominions enjoy."

(The Message from King George to Indian people at the inauguration of the Legislative Assembly at Delhi on the 9th February. 1891.)

"If the Indian spirit asserts itself, Indian Swaraj may easily transform itself into a series of Moral and Religious republics, like the village republics of the old, in the age of the Buddha - where man's moral needs and opportunities will prevail over his physical and material proclivities, where the intellect will be the servant of the moral reason, where the divine in man will assert itself over the animal and the brute."

(*The Ideal of Swaraj*, N.B. Banerjee, Ganesh & Co, 1921, p-61)

Until the Philosophers are the Kings. or the Kings and Princes of this world have the spirit and power of Philosophers and political wisdom and greatness meet in one ... cities will never have rest from their evils, nor the human race."

(Plato's Republic by Jowett, 1888, Oxford, p.170)

I

Introduction

Swaraj in different contexts and usages connotes a set of meanings like - liberation, freedom, self determination, autonomy and self government. Though the modern usage of the term has an aura of Gandhian thinking, the term traditionally stands for the highest human endeavour (*parama-puruṣārtha*) in implying the idea of "manifesting in one's own splendour"[1] which in Vedāntic equivalence means *mokṣa* or liberation. It nurtures the notion of a philosophical

Home rule which Gandhi preferred to express the idea of independence for India from the evils of British rule. Gandhi was sufficiently aware of the fact that it was not the British rule alone which was the cause of the subjugation, but it was the disunity, immorality, dishonesty, selfishness and ignorance which are at the core of our national plight of driving ourselves into dependence and slavehood. Time and again, he pointed out that the British had not won over India, but we Indians had given it to them, made ourselves slaves to work for them. In all our professions and practices, Gandhi felt, we emulated the English and catered to their domination on us.[2] Gandhian agenda of Swaraj includes a strong dose of social emancipation than a tradition based spiritual realisation. As to the need of the society of his times and realising the conspicuous maladies that his country men are subjected to, he evolved this as a mode of self awareness and self justification so that the people would liberate themselves from all types of bondage and aspire for a better life ultimately conducive for a spiritual emancipation or attaining Swaraj in its spiritual sense. By exerting the ideals of self rule through self control, antidoting the evil by passive resistance or soul-force (*Satyāgraha*), adopting Swadeshi in all spheres having a sense of duty, Gandhi felt the possibility not only of Indian political independence but also of a cultural emancipation from the influences of the Western civilisation.

Taking the traditional and Gandhian implications of Swaraj, now it is necessary to engage ourselves in a self testifying discourse to find out as to how much freedom we have or to what extent Swadeshi we are in our thinking, a thinking that marks us as the torch bearers of the Ancient Indian thinkers, their philosophy and their tradition. At this particular period of our being, when we are eager to jump into the lap of modernity as enunciated by the Western civilisation, it is all the more important to rethink our independence whether it has only given us the right to exercise our franchise or there is a way for indigenous thinking based on our tradition and interacting with other traditions to steer up a possibility for a cultural assimilation. In this paper, I intend to deal with the views of certain contemporary thinkers and show how Western bias has not deterred them from presenting a traditional Indian view to suit certain modern contexts culminating in a cultural synthesis. Such synthesis, nevertheless falls a victim to concocting of one's tradition as the exercises of these type are based on certain compromises to the core or the periphery of the traditional tenets.

II

Understanding Swaraj

Swaraj in the sense of 'self-rule' or 'own domain', justifies a series of connotations in keeping with the situational dimension of a person. The Vedāntic understanding of the term depicts a holistic understanding of one's own self as free from the duality of the world. The hermeneutic of Swaraj refers to a social reality of freedom which can have political, economic and

existential dimensions. These spheres of human reality boils down to one's understanding and engagement in a cherished way of living and valuing that as the ideal way of existence. In this sense Swaraj is the Swaraj of ideas and ideals and any state of swerving away from these ideals results in a struggle for regaining the lost state or to the pristine nature of one's being. The struggle too depends on the self examination of one's own state of being and it involves an endeavour for an upward progression resulting in ultimate actualization of the self *per se*, be it social or individual. In this sense, the Swarajic ideals do not stand for some concept which can be bestowed from without, but it is something which must grow from within outwards. In the context of social Swaraj, every individual partakes in its result, the emancipation whichever type it be, but it might not be visualised by all the members in a given society before its advent. In other words, the expectation to have understanding and endeavour for all is to place the cart before the horse and such a possibility is extremely rare in history. Gandhi had such a vision of Swaraj and in his heart of hearts, he felt that India had a great Swarajic tradition with its roots which are basically sound. He has also a vision of the common masses in India, whose minds are not corrupted by the modern Western civilisation and who continued to live independently enjoying a natural endowment of Swaraj before the advent of the alien rulers. He also felt that the Western civilised Indians were really enslaved and English education had become a means of enslavement of the Indian nation. Gandhian Swaraj dismissed the concept of elitism. Gandhi viewed "Real Swaraj will come not by the acquisition of authority by a few, but by the acquisition of the capacity by all to resist authority when it is abused."[3] He thought Swaraj to be the birth right of a person and was strongly convinced that it was our sacred duty to win it.[4] By keeping the Indian condition in view in the pre-independent days, Gandhi saw the success of Swaraj in the attainment of 1. bread labour, 2. removal of untouchability 3. Hindu-Muslim unity. Gandhi diagnosed the state of repression in the society and the effort of the British to perpetuate such a state by inculcating the milieus of Western civilisation into the Indian minds so that even after the physical or political independence, the mental slavery would continue. Hence he worked for a holistic Swaraj which would make Indians get back not only their country but also the cultural tradition which had been thoroughly getting destroyed by the British.

The Dialectic of the Transition

Looking at today's state of affair that our country is in, we find that the whole concept of Swaraj has taken a caricatural 'u'-turn and it seems to be a contradiction in terms. Rapid industrialisation, the dangers of globalisation, the creation of different type of class structure have not only geared Swaraj out of its wheels but it has brought about the fresh dangers by which the worst doubt of Gandhi is shaping towards a glaring reality. The Western civilisation has started gulping the vitality of our tradition and if the trend continues in the same scale, in a foreseeable future, we would not have the Indian cultural

heritage living in this country excepting its traces in the History text books. The greatest danger lies in the English educated Indians who have been enslaved by Western pattern and have developed contempt for anything Indian. They not only undermine our tradition but take advantage of certain weak points of the society to condemn it and perpetuate the British trend by enslaving the innocent masses who because of their ignorance fall a victim to them. This miscalculation in their part, involves the repercussion of enslavement on the alien ideas and also the danger of creating a permanent mortuary for the Indian creativity as when the tradition is lost, the creativity as a part of the tradition is going to have a definite end.

This paper examines the ideals of two contemporary philosophers who have tried to assimilate the Western and Indian traditions and tries to evaluate their success in achieving such an objective. I have taken two thinkers as two samples, one Ram Mohan Roy as a pre-Gandhian and Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan as a contemporary thinker to trace Western influence in them and examine their attempts towards an assimilation of traditions.

III

Ram Mohan Roy

With the advent of the British, and starting from Warren Hastings, the top bureaucrat and Max Muller, the great scholar, the whole idea was focused to undermine Indian tradition and culture. The entire educational system catered to the needs of manufacturing clerks who would help British administration as remote control devices. The Sanskrit and Sanskrit scholars were looked down upon and English educated persons were given profound encouragement. Because of their proximity, the people of the Indian states like Bengal, Madras and Bombay were the first to come in contact with them and had the facility of being exposed to English education and way of life. Ram Mohon Roy (1772-1833) of Bengal was a product of this exposure who tried to evaluate and analyse the Indian tradition by his knowledge of Western religious traditions. Ram Mohan wrote on various themes like politics, law, education, religion and philosophy. He was the founder of Brahmo Samaj which dominated the Bengali middle class in the 19th century and is still remembered as a movement worked for the abolition of *Sati* in 1829. He was one of the early English knowing Indians who advocated English education in India. In 1823, he wrote to Lord Amherst, the Governer General in favour of it :

> employing European gentleman of talents and Education to instruct the natives of India in Mathematics, Natural Philosophy, Chemistry, Anatomy and other useful sciences, which the Nations of Europe have carried to a degree of perfection that has raised them above the inhabitants of other parts of the world.[5]

This letter has helped Macaulay to design his minutes of education of 1835. His association with the British administration started from 1803 and he worked as Dewan to many British Bureaucrats up to 1815. He amassed a lot of property because of his association with the British and cherished to live a life in English style. His religion was the rational worship of the God of nature. He formed his own circle called Ātmīya Sabhā to practice his religion and later on this society was known as Brahma Samaj. He denounced "Sati", objected to caste system, ritual purity and Hindu polytheism. All through, in his predilections and practices, he felt that it is necessary to distinguish between true religion from false practices which are embodied in all major religions. He had identified the good tenets of all the religions. There were rumours that he was a convert Christian or a convert Muslim. Max Muller pointed out that:

> He never became a Mohammedan, he never became a Christian, but he remained to the end a Brahmin, a believer of the Veda, and in one God, as he maintained, had been revealed in the Veda, especially in the Vedānta, long before he revealed himself in the Bible or in the Koran. [6]

In his *Abridgement of the Vedānta*, we find a tendency to adapt to the rational theism of contemporary Europe. In his *Tuhfat,* he talks of innovations within the tradition. He thought that if something is static it cannot be adopted for all times to come. There should be scope for change and there is such scope in our religions. His belief that God is revealed in nature and reason, rather than scripture matched with enlightenment thinkers of the 18th century Europe. The anti-clericalism of the Enlightenment is echoed in his criticism of Brahmins, and of other religious authorities who use the religion for their own advantage. While writing on Hindu tradition, he always referred to Vedic and Smṛti literature. In his writings on Bible, he exemplified the authority of Bible. Monier Williams described him as "probably the first earnest-minded investigator of the science of comparative religion that the world has produced."[7] Ram Mohan was one of the first writers in India who uses the word Hinduism liberally. [8] Following him Bankim Chandra and Vivekananda also tried to shape Hinduism in its pristine nature devoid of blind beliefs and corrupt practices.

In his commentary on the *Vedānta Sūtras*, in Bengali, he follows the dialogical model of Śaṅkara in giving the prima facie views and answering them to establish his own views. Since Ram Mohan did the philosophy in a totally unorthodox manner, he was severely criticised by many Pandits and other traditional scholars. But in the 18th century, in the decline of the royal patronage, Bengal Pundits depended on British Government for their employment and their being the upholder of the tradition was inconsistent with their dependence on the colonial economy. Ram Mohan could score off his opponents as his knowledge of the source material was immense and could give full references to his points which his opponents could hardly do. In his age, Advaita Vedānta was not the core subject widely read by Bengali Pundits.

Most of them specialised in Nyāya, Dharmaśāstra, literature or Vaiṣṇavism. After Madhusūdana Sarasvatī, the *bhakti* movement of Caitanya occupied the religious psyche of the Bengalis till the last part of 19th century. Hence by propounding a Non-dualistic thought, Ram Mohan became a radical religionist and attracted the wrath of many men of letters during his times. He always viewed that the worshippers of the supreme Being are not hostile to any form of worship. In support of his view, he quotes a passage from the *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya* of Śaṅkara.

> Brahman is the omnipotent cause of the origination, sustenance and destruction of this world, which is differentiated by name and form, contains a multitude of agents and experiencers, abounds in results of actions determined by place, time and occasion, and has a design whose form cannot be thought of even by the mind.[9]

While Śaṅkara describes the incomprehensible profusion of the universe, Ram Mohan points to its intricate and all-embracing order. He objects to any identification of God with a mythical personality or with any being that has a name and form. In keeping with the Vedic spirit, Ram Mohan interprets the ritual and mythology as the lower knowledge which can be superseded by the higher knowledge of the formless God. The difference between two levels of truth as enunciated in Advaita vedānta, in Ram Mohan's view has a sotoriological dimension; he held the view that the rewards for the two forms of worship are different. He has answered all the objections raised against him in propounding these views. Because of his radical views, many of his Brahmo Samaj friends disowned him later. One of his close associates, Devendranath Tagore wrote:

> The Brahma Samaj must be saved from three dangers: first, idolatry; second Christianity, then Vedantism.[10]

This is perhaps the reason why Dayananda Saraswatī, started refuting Advaita in the process of establishing his tenets for Aryasamaj. Ram Mohan's criticism of Advaita includes a point frequently made against it by Christians: that by calling the world false it leaves no place for ethics. In his preference to Hinduism to any other religion he observed :

> If religion consists of the blessings of self knowledge and improved notions of God and his attributes, a system of morality has a subordinate place. I certainly prefer the Vedas.[11]

To Christian observers, Ram Mohan was an ambivalent figure. On one side, he embodied the enlightened Hindu who had forsaken idolatry, defied the

hostility of his family and tried to spread enlightenment as learnt from the West to his country men. On the other hand, he was a self confident deist who refused the way to salvation offered by the missionaries, and whose view of God was so defective that it was little better than the one he had rejected.

Hindu Tradition and Ram Mohan

A French contemporary, G.Pauthier, observed that the controversy with Hindus and Christians has produced in Ram Mohan as it were two people, one confronting the English Christians and the other the Hindu Brahmins... When he addresses his countrymen, he supports all the arguments with quotations from books that are revered by Indians.. When he addresses the English Missionaries, his thinking is more independent of Indian religious authorities: he uses European polemic and he proves to them by their own authorities, the Hebrew and Greek scriptures, the fathers of the church, and so on, that they are wrong. [12]

In all these, Ram Mohan shows no clarity of his thinking to the common man and his support to the British in their educational policy at the cost of our tradition shows his concocted perception. In his letter to Lord Amherst on Education in 1823, he criticises the Government's proposal for starting a new Sanskrit college, in which the pupils will acquire what was known two thousand years ago, with the addition of vain and empty subtleties once produced by speculative men, the money may be better spent, he felt on Western Science.[13] Thus we see that his habit of working within more than one tradition has led him in attempting to distinguish his real beliefs from those which he might have professed provisionally. This even led to a controversy after his death, when some priests claimed that he was a Christian.

Assimilation of Traditions

Ram Mohan's views sometimes give us the impression that he tried to work out an assimilation of traditions. But he did that at the cost of an age old Indian tradition. The colonial situation forced upon him the necessity of evolving such a synthesis of Eastern and Western cultures and in doing this, he gave importance to collective wisdom than individual reason which in the process distorted his own tradition. Here we find the difference between Ram Mohan and other traditional Advaitins of our land. He enjoyed a concept of Swaraj that was intermixed with the tenets of the West. So the so called modernity was given a reality in Ram Mohan's writings which gave much scope for concessionalism within Hindu tradition. But it was done in a different way so that it gave the reader an impression that the whole attempt was to cleanse the misunderstandings that sprout around any religio-philosophico thinking of the world. The whole discussion of Ram Mohan is to show the type of free thinking he professed in a pre- Gandhian era in this sub-continent.

IV

S. Radhakrishnan

Now I take up the ideas of Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan (1888-1975) to deal with an other sample of Swaraj in ideas in post-Gandhian era. Even though he was a younger contemporary of Gandhi. and had authored most of his writing in the years before Indian independence. I put him as a Post-Gandhian Indian thinker as he not only occupied and enjoyed great constitutional positions in free India but in his writings and precepts he evolved a synthesis of cultures showing a different aspect Swaraj in the assimilation of Eastern and Western ideas. This shows a shift from the Gandhian perception of Swaraj. in which Gandhi felt that to be free is to have everythir ; of one's own and in Indian context, we should imbibe our traditional pattern be it political, industrial, religious and the like. Radhakrishnan was born to Telugu Brahmin parents and had all his education in Missionary schools and colleges and had the opportunity of enjoying the patronage of the British scholars and academicians. As a student and teacher of philosophy. Radhakrishnan's writings are always comparative and critical. In *The Hindu View of Life*, which was a compilation of his Upton Lectures delivered at Manchester College. Oxford in 1926. he concludes his lectures with the observation:

> After a long winter of some centuries, we are today in one of the creative periods of Hinduism. We are beginning to look upon our ancient faith with fresh eyes. We feel that our society is in a condition of unstable equilibrium. There is much wood that is dead and diseased that has to be cleared away. Leaders of Hindu thought and practice are convinced that the times require not a surrender of the basic principles of Hinduism, but a restatement of them with special reference to the needs of a more complex and mobile social order. Such an attempt will only be the repetition of a process which has occurred a number of times in the history of Hinduism. The work of readjustment is in process. Growth is slow when roots are deep. But those who light a little candle in the darkness will help to make the whole sky aflame.[14]

The above idea makes us think on the Hinduism. its inherent strength and elasticity to stretch itself for the future Indians and keep up with the times. In the above observation. Radhakrishnan wants to put forth the need for a revised Hinduism. which would be more accommodative than it has been. more open to the human predicaments than dealing with metaphysical speculations. In a similar mode. Gandhi too opined that there should be no proselitisation in religions. He observed :

> 'If a person wants to believe in the Bible. let him do so. but why should he discard his own religion? This proselytisation will mean no place in the world. Religion is a very personal matter. We should by living the life according to our lights share the best with one another. thus adding to the sum total of human effort to reach God.[15]

Radhakrishnan and Universal Religion

Gandhi had a strong feeling that there is no proselytization in Hinduism and he viewed that we should pray that a Hindu should be a better Hindu. a Muslim a better Muslim and a Christian a better Christian. This. according to him, is the fundamental truth of fellowship.[16] Here we can also see his concept of Swaraj as Gandhi wants that every individual should have the opportunity to enjoy the fellowship of others in spite of the differences in their religions. Radhakrishnan tries to show this in a different way by propounding a dynamic Hinduism which imbibes a tacit acceptance of universals. Being born in the south of India, in spite of his English education and patronage he was influenced by our scriptures like *Upaniṣads*, *Gītā* and *Brahmasūtras* and tried to show the dynamic character of Hinduism in all his English commentaries of the texts. Like Ram Mohan. he tried to see the core of the religon and thought that it is possible to conceive of a universal religion. This idea might have been influenced by his knowedge of Christianity which believes in the catholicity of love. He observes:

> For the first time in the history of our planet its inhabitants have beome one whole, each and evey part of whih is affected the fortunes of each other. Science and technology, without aiming at this result have achieved this unity. Economic and political phenomena are increasingly imposing on us the obligation to treat the world as a unit.[17]

He showed enormous concern in viewing that at the core of every form of true religion there is bound to be a mysticism which is universal in character. Hence the doctrinal differences need not detain us long to visualise this aspect of this universality in religions. His critics brand him as having Vedāntic bias in all his writings which is not totally unfounded. For him Vedānta is not a religion, but religion itself in its most universal and deepest significance.[18] He believed that Hindu seers have always treated other sects and religions with greatest respect. He said:

> Hinduism developed an attitude of comprehensive charity instead of a fanatic faith in an inflexible creed. Heresy-hunting, the favourite game of many religions. is absent from Hinduism.[19]

He was not opposed to many aspects of religion like that of Ram Mohan. He felt that if oriental inwardness and occidental activism could be truly co-ordinated. the problem of world religion could be substantially be solved. In his *Eastern Religions and Western Thought*, Radhakrishnan tries to bring about a synthesis of two dichotomous world views. Like Gandhi. he too was critical about the different ways of worshipping and sacrifices. About Vedic knowledge Gandhi once observed:

> Mere knowledge of the Vedas cannot make our Brāhmaṇas spiritual preceptors. If it did. Max Muller would have become one. The Brāhmaṇa who has understood the religion of today will certainly give vedic learning a secondary place and propagate the religion of the spinning wheel. relieve the hunger of the millions of his starving country men and only then, and not until then, lose himself in vedic studies. [20]

This shows Gandhian Swarajic ideas which includes a concern for all. rich and poor in whichever state he is or going to be. one must work for perfection till he achieves it. Gandhi thought that it is useless to talk on religion and philosophy to a hungry man. Swaraj in ideas will not have any meaning for a person who does not fulfill the basic needs. But Radhakrishnan tries to work out a Swaraj in ideas and attempts to place Hinduism in its proper perspective so that the world perceives the spirit behind it and understands its value which it definitely deserves. Radhkrishnan observed that :

> While fixed intellectual beliefs mark off one religion from the another. Hinduism sets itself no such limits. Intellect is subordinated to intuition. dogma to experience. outer expression to inward realisation.... It is insight in to the nature of reality, *darśana* or experience of Reality *(anubhava)*.[21]

In his endeavour to establish his view on universal religion. and universality in thinking Radhakrishnan has become a victim of his own ideas which he borrowed from the West and gives scope for mistaking Hindu tolerance for concessionalism or helpless approval. In an attempt to focus the greatness of his religion Radhakrishnan has not shown any concern for the society and the plight of the common mass who has no concern for the religion or philosophy excepting his effort for earning his bread. Again, to equate Hinduism with Vedānta in Vivekananda's style amounts to over simplification for which Radhakrishnan has to give sufficient explanation.

V

An Evaluation

In presenting a preface for Swaraj in ideas as depicted in Ram Mohan. the activist. and noticing its transformed presence in Radhakrishnan, the philosopher, we find that there is an attempt in both these thinker to salvage their traditions and think in the same line of traditionalists in a modern tone. But in the process of evolving such ideas. they could not come out of their preferences for the Western patterns and became victims of their own taste. When Gandhi wanted an all - comprehensive Swaraj. for his country men. poor and middle class Indians. Ram Mohan and Radhakrishnan were engaged in addressing to an audience which was either Western or have Western orientation. Ram Mohan definitely entertained certain social concern for the eradication of *Sati* and the

like: but his Western predilections and practices overshadowed his social reformations and could not earn him the appreciation he deserved. In experimenting with the Swaraj in ideas. Radhakrishnan approached the tradition by having a comparative methodology and designed his thinking like a Messaiah of the people for his propagation of Universal religion. This was a sheer miscalculation on his part as in developing a universal religion, he could perceive only the physical features of the religions not the social or individual psyche involved in its very being. From all the experiments in this direction to evolve universal religion, we can safely come to the conclusion that it is nothing but a contradiction in terms. But when we see their efforts to inject Swarajic ideas in their writings, we have to appreciate both the thinkers because they thought that our tradition had been in no way inferior than those which are thought to be superior by the Westerners.

Secondly, the Swarajic idea or freedom in idea must entertain a notion of transcending that particular idea; or else there is possibility of limiting the scope of freedom by erecting a conceptual wall around it. To give an example, I may quote Gandhi, who wrote:

> There is no such thing called 'Gandhism', and I do not want to leave any sect after me. I do not claim to have originated any new principle or doctrine. I have simply tried in my own way to apply the eternal truths to our daily life and problems..... The opinion I have framed and the conclusion I have arrived are not final. I have nothing new to teach the world. [22]

To me, the Swaraj should have such an inbuilt phenomenon within it by which you transcend the so called prescription of adhering to a particular pattern of thinking. This can go to give the freedom in thinking which can go across the traditions and across the other so called impediments without losing its base from which it has started. Ram Mohan and Radhkrishnan failed to notice this and could not maintain this in their writings.

Thirdly, the Swaraj in ideas would probably dawn when that which is a-Swarajic is obliterated from our minds and thinking process. I would like to cite Gandhi, of course in a different context to bring home the above point. Gandhi wanted that India should not have Large scale industries and he did it so that the Western way of mechanisation can be checked and the industry suitable to India can be encouraged. The idea is made clear by Suresh Chandra when he observed:

> Gandhi certainly did not reject machine and Industry. Had he rejected machine and Industry, then he would have prohibited the development of cottage industry and handicraft. He wished the machine and industry to reach each and every house of an Indian village..... This was Gandhi's industrial revolution, quite unlike the industrial revolution that occurred in Europe. [23]

This is the model I invoke to deal with the Swaraj in ideas too. I feel that unless we check the cultural influence of the West we can not make use of our native talent that has been there in our tradition. But at a period when our living and thinking have been vastly influenced by the West, with the unscrupulous power polity reigning the world in which man divides the world into several worlds, we cannot expect such a change unless the policy makers adopt the expertise of the wise people or become wise themselves to govern. Such a possibility is remote and even after Fifty years of Indian independence, there is no sign of restitution of Swaraj in ideas in a foreseeable future. We can only think of diluting our tradition and synthesis with other traditions which will not have the authenticity of the either. Moreover, synthesising is a product of diversity and with the modernisation process knocking at our door steps, we have to design the Swaraj in ideas in a different way to suit our convenience which have been amply depicted by Ram Mohan and Radhakrishnan.

NOTES

1 sve mahimni rājate iti svārājyam. Gangādharandra Sarasvatī's *Svārājya Siddhi.*

2 Hind Swaraj, p.19-64.

3. *Complete Works of Mahatma Gandhi (CW) 66.175.*

4 *Ibid,* 36.296.

5. Dermot Killingkey, *Rammohun in Hindu and Christian Tradition,* The Teape Lectures 1990. 1993, p.2.

6. *asya jagato nāmarūpābhyāṁ vyākṛtasyānekakartṛ-bhoktṛ-saṁyuktasya pratiniyata-deśa-kālanimitta-kriyāphalāśrayasya mānasapyacintya-racanārūpasya janma-sthiti-bhangaṁ yataḥ sarvajñāt sarvaśakteḥ kāraṇād bhavati tad brahmeti vākya-śeṣaḥ, Śāṅkarabhāṣya on Brahmasūtra - 2.*

7. P.K. Sen. . *Biography of a New Faith,* 1950, p.148.

8. D.K. Biswas and P.C. Ganguly. (Ed.) The Life and Letters of of Raja Ramohun Roy by S.D. Collet, 1962, p.97ff.

9. Dermot Killingkey, Rammohun in Hindu and Christian Tradition, The Teape Lectures 1990. 1993, p.149.

10. P.K. Sen. . Biography of a New Faith. 1950. p 148.

11 D.K. Biswas and P.C. Ganguly. (Ed.) *The Life and Letters of of Raja Ramohun Roy* by S.D. Collet, 1962, p.97ff.

12. Dermot Killingkey. Rammohun in Hindu and Christian Tradition. The Teape Lectures 1990. 1993, p.149.

13 Dermot Killingkey. *Rammohun Roy's Interpretation of the Vedānta,* London, 1993, p.105.

14. S. Radhakrishnan, *The Hindu View of Life,* New York, 1927, pp. 91-2.

15 *Hindu Dharma,* Navjivan Press, 1950, 1950. , 231.

16. Robert Ellsberg, Gandhi on *Christianity,* New York, p.5.

17. S. Radhakrishnan. *East and West in Religion,* p.5.

18. M.K.Gandhi. *Hindu View of Life,* p.23.

19 *Ibid,* p 19-37.

20. M.K.Gandhi. *Hindu Dharma,* p.11.

21. *Hindu View of Life,* p.13.

22 M.K.Gandhi. *Hindu Dharma,* p. 279.

23. *ICPR Journal* (Special Issue) June, 1996, p.164.

3

STRUCTURALISM,POSTSTRUCTURALISM AND POSTMODERNISM

S. PANNEERSELVAM

In the background of structuralism, poststructuralism and postmodernism, Contemporary Philosophy has progressed very much. These three important movements gave rise to new social theories, which influenced the literary and cultural criticism, the new concept of writing, theory and discourse. For example, the structuralist and the poststructuralist revolution played an important role in shaping many linguistic and philosophical theories. A study of the contemporary thinkers like Saussure, Foucault, Derrida, Ricoeur and others will help us to evaluate them in the postmodern thinking which is playing a dominant role for the past twenty five years.

Marxism, existentialism and phenomenology once dominated the philosophical scene. But in 1960s, these theories were superseded by theories like, Saussurean structuralism, Lacanian psychoanalysis, Derridean method of deconstruction and others, which advocated new concepts of language, theory, subjectivity and society. The structuralists applied structural linguistic concepts to the human sciences. Levi-Strauss, for example, applied linguistic analysis to structural studies of mythology, kinship system and other anthropological phenomena. Similarly, Lacan developed a structural psychoanalysis, and Althusser, a structural Marxism. The aim of all these structural activity, says Barthes, is to reconstitute an object and by this process, to make known the rules of functionary. Thus structural analysis is focused on the underlying rules which organized phenomena into a social system. It always aimed at objectivity, coherence, rigour, truth, and claims scientific structure for its theories.

Ferdinand de Saussure is one who made a linguistic turn in the structural analysis. According to him, language cannot be reduced to a mere sound. Speech has both an individual and a social side and it is impossible to conceive one without the other. Speech always implies both an established system and an evolution. At every moment, it is an existing institution and a product of the past. Thus he made the distinction between language and speech. Language

(langue) is different from human speech *(language)*. Language is different from speaking because language is social whereas speaking is individual; also language is essential but speech is accessory and more or less accidental.[1] This means that language is a product which is assimilated by the individual but speaking is an individual act. "Language is a well-defined object in the heterogeneous mass of speech acts... It is the social side of speech. outside the individual who can never create nor modify it by himself; it exists only by virtue of a sort of contract signed by the members of community". says Saussure.[2] Language is a system of signs in which the only essential thing is the union of meanings and sound-images and hence it is homogeneous.

Language and writing are two distinct systems of signs and the second exists for the sole purpose of representing the first. The linguistic sign unites not a thing and a name. but a concept and a sound-image. The linguistic sign is two-sided psychological entity that is explained by Saussure. The two elements, namely. the concept and sound-image are intimately united. The combination is otherwise known as a *sign*. The concept is represented by the word *signified* and sound-image by *signifier*. The bond between the signifier and at the signified is arbitrary. By this we mean that there is no fixed bond between the signifier and the signified. In Saussure's structuralism one can see the difference between a science of states of the system or synchronic linguistics and a science of changes or diachronic lingusitics. The synchrony aspect of language is somewhat static in the sense that it allows us to grasp the nature of language whereas the diachronic operates on the level of the event. which allows certain changes in the language. and is made possible by speaking. These two are known as the static and dynamic aspects of language. Also in Saussurean approach. there are no absolute terms. but only relations of mutual dependence. "In language, the identity of linguistic units depend on the difference or opposites that separate them from one another". says Saussure.[3]

But the above position of Saussure is not acceptable to both the poststructuralists and postmodernists who stress on the arbitrary and conventional nature of everything. For example. Baudrillard and Lyotard were keen on developing notions of a new postmodern era. The developments in postmodernism theory constituted a rupture with the rationalist tradition founded by Descartes and further developed in the French Enlightenment. Thus both poststructuralism and postmodernism emerged as one of the series of revolts against Cartesian rationalism ranging from the Enlightenment attack on theoretical reason in favour of promoting rational social change. through Comte and Durkheim's revolt against philosophical rationalism in favour of social science. Though some of the aspects of structuralism are included in poststructuralism and postmodernism. both these movements have a lot to object to the structuralists' thoughts. But all the three have one thing in common. *i.e.*. structuralism. postmodernism and poststructuralism constitute a series of attacks on rationalist and Enlightenment theory.

A series of socio-economic. cultural. theoretical and political events occurred in the Contemporary scene throughout the globe. which helped in one way to give rise to new postmodern theories. France is a very good example for this. French theories were very much influenced by the rapid modernization process in France that followed World War II. In 1950s and 1960s there were many theories developed. Post-world war II modernization processes in France was an important event in this context. Scholars like John Ardagh argue that between the early 1950s and mid 1970s France went through a spectacular renewal. As a result of this, one can see the economic and social developments. urbanization. modernization. and industrial development in France. In the 1970s. French theorists were attacking modern theories rooted in humanist assumption and Enlightenment rationalist discourses. For example in *Madness and Civilization* (1973), Foucault talks of "death of man" while formulating new conception of politics and ethics. Similarly Baudrillard's new form of society. culture. experience and subjectivity. Lyotard's idea of the impossibility of continuity with the totalizing social theories and the need for revitalizing the politics of the past are the important happenings in the postmodernist trend in France. Also one can mention about Deleuze, Guattari, Lacan and Mouffe. Deleuze and Guattari's conception of language. their criticisms against linguistics. their views on the social concept of meaning have emerged due to serious philosophical thinking. The postmodernists call for new categories. modes of thought and writing. and values and politics to overcome the deficiencies of modern discourses and practices have made significant change in the Contemporary French philosophy. Some like Lyotard and Foucault. focus on developing alternative modes of knowledge and discourse. Baudrillard, emphasizes the forms of economy. society. culture and experience. Laclau and Mouffe, use postmodernism critiques to go beyond Marxism and to reconstruct the project of radical democracy.

There is another movement, which to some extent arose as a counter to structuralism, *i.e.*, poststucturalism, which rejects some concepts of structuralism. For example, the poststructuralists who attacked the basic presuppositions of structuralists have pointed the arbitrary, differential and non-referential character of the sign. They also attacked the claims of structuralists that the mind has an innate, universal structure. The critiques of structuralism are Derrida. Foucault. Kristeva, Lyotard, Barthes and others. The poststructuralism gave primacy to the signifier over the signified. For them, the signified is only a moment in a never ending process of signification where meaning is produced not in a stable, referential relation between subjects and object. but only within the infinite, intertextual play of signifiers. Deleuze and Guattari concept of desire. Lyotard's theory of intensities. Baudrillard's concept of semiurgy. and Foucault's concept of power are important in this context.

Ricoeur is one who has pointed out the limitations of structuralism. According to him. structuralism excludes number of aspects of language. For example, the act of speaking is excluded not only as an individual performance.

but also as the free creation of new expressions. Similarly, history is also excluded and "not simply the change from one state of system to another but the production of culture and of man in the production of his language."[4] The primary intention of language, which is to say something about something, is also not taken into account by structuralism. Language has a double direction: an ideal direction (to say something) and a real reference (to say about something). This aspect of language is absent in structuralism according to Ricoeur.

It is interesting to note that postmodern theorists and poststructuralists followed the Derridean method of deconstruction of modern philosophy and thus, there was a radical new philosophical practice. Poststructuralism forms part of the postmodernism theory according to modern thinkers. It is argued that poststructuralism are a subset and a broader range of theoretical, cultural, and social tendencies constituting postmodern discourses. Postmodern theory is a more inclusive phenomenon of poststructuralism. Postmodern theory generally follows poststructuralist theory in the primacy given to discourse theory in which it is argued that meaning is not simply given, but is socially constructed across a number of institutional sites and practices. The writings of Ricoeur, Foucault, Derrida, Habermas and others prove this. In *The Rule of Metaphor* (1975), Ricoeur develops a theory of discourse. For a theory of discourse, the sentence is important rather than words because discourse is a manifestation of language in textual form. It is only at the level of the sentence that language can refer to something. The sentence is not longer the unit of a language (or system), but of speech or discourse. Thus his theory of discourse rests on (a) the relation between discourse and reference, (b) symbol and its interpretation and (c) the hermeneutics of distanciation. Discourse always occurs as an event and at the same time can be understood as meaning.[5] Because of this aspect, one can talk about it, learn from it, evaluate it and also interpret it. Discourse allows all these. Language exists only when a speaker takes it in his possession and actualized it whereas as the event of discourse, it can be identified and reidentified as "the same". This aspect of language is well accommodated in both poststructuralism and postmodernism. Discourse occupies a prominent place in the writings of postmodern thinkers like Habermas. His distinction between action and discourse helps one to understand his ideal speech situation. In any successful discourse, the speakers involved in must have reciprocalicity. For a discourse, the four conditions are to be fulfilled. They are: (i) the intelligibility of the utterance, (ii) the truth of the propositional content, (iii) the correctness of the performatory component and (iv) the sincerity of the speaking subject. Habermas further claims that the meaningful of language and its usage can become a complete process only in the form of discourse.

Habermas's theory of communicative competence, which he calls a "universal pragmatics", has the aim of systematically investigating the general structures which appear in every possible speech situation, which are themselves produced through the performance of specific types of linguistic expressions,

and which serve to situate pragmatically the expressions generated by the linguistically competent speaker. Wittgenstein's understanding of language games, and Austin's and Searles' analysis of speech acts—as well as Chomsky's analysis of linguistic competence—all these help Habermas to develop the theory that all linguistic communication presupposes a background consensus. For Habermas, linguistic intersubjectivity is the medium within which claims to truth, in the cognitive sense as well as claims to rightness and authenticity, can be raised and arbitrated. We cannot jump out of the language with which our subjectivity is interwoven. For Habermas, the intersubjective dimension of speech cannot be disconnected from the cognitive in this way. This is because it is distinctive feature of articulated speech that even when at utterance takes the form of, say, a command or a question rather than of an assertion, it nevertheless possesses a content which can be put into propositional form. Even a request contains a reference to a state of affairs. Thus Habermas argues against Wittgenstein that the meaning constitutive aspect of language cannot be examined in separation from its knowledge-constitutive aspect. Habermas views that Wittgenstein overlooks the fact that the cognitive use of language reveals the dimension which all speech acts must be related. He says that in every elementary utterance there appears a dependent proposition which depends upon the dominant proposition and which expresses the propositional content concerning which agreement is to be reached. This double structure of the speech-act mirrors the structure of speech in general: an understanding, cannot be reached when both partners do not simultaneously occupy both levels—(a) the level of intersubjectivity, which a speaker and hearer speak with each other and (b) the level of objects or states of affairs concerning which they reach agreement. This means that without the propositional content which is thematized in the cognitive use of speech, the interactive use of speech would also be impossible. Habermas suggests that it is precisely the one sided emphasis upon the interactive use of speech in Wittgenstein which led his later philosophy predominantly therapeutic cast.

Habermas is aware of the "dual structure of speech". Every act of speech, communicates simultaneously on two levels: it conveys a content which. can in principle, be cashed out in propositional form: but also establishes a metacommunication which specifies what he calls the "sense of application" of the content. Metacommunication consists in a system of reciprocal expectations on the part of the participants in dialogue. Habermas is fully aware that metacommunication cannot be determined at the level of explicit knowledge. Metacommunication can be objectified in a further act of speech, but this act of speech will in turn possess its own metacommunicative level, so that dialogue is characterized by an intersubjective dimension which cannot be simultaneously established and objectified. For Habermas, the relation of language, action and experience differ in principle in three forms of knowledge. In the *Theory of Communicative Action* (1981), he explains the notion of linguistic intersubjectivity. The idea here is to emphasize how validity claims are referred to in intersubjective agreement. Communication oriented to reaching an

understanding can be contain only to the degree to which participants credibly sustain the four types of validity claims which are mentioned already. Thus in postmodernism one can see the role of discourse in understanding which the structuralism failed to take into account.

Similarly Foucault's critique of modernity and humanism, his proclamation of the "death of man", his new perspectives on society, knowledge are some of the important themes connected with postmodernism. He belongs to an anti-Enlightenment tradition, which rejects the equation of reason, emancipation and progress. He has been influenced by the post metaphysical, post humanist mode of thought of Nietzsche. From Nietzsche, he could learn the way of writing a "genealogical history" of unconventional topics such as reason, madness, and the subject which located their emergence within sites of dimension. Foucault was very much influenced by Bataille's attitude towards Enlightenment reason. His attack on the sovereign philosophical subject has influenced Foucault very much. He has developed a critique in the form of a new historiographical approach, which he terms "archaeology" and "genealogy". In him, one can see the shift from the more narrowly methodological concerns, which preoccupied him during the late 1960s. His thought is rooted in highly individual historical vision, which centers on the transition from traditional to modern industrial societies, and is specifically concerned with the forms of knowledge and modes of social organization characteristic of capitalist modernity. One of the important aspects of his approach has been to "respect...differences". For example, his historical methodology attempts to grasp the specificity and discontinuity of discourses. He characterizes his position as "an archaeology of knowledge". He uses the term "archaeology" to differentiate his historical approach from other modes of analysis. He rejects the philosophical pretensions to grasp systematically all of reality within one philosophical system or from one central vantagepoint. For him, no single theory or method of interpretation by itself can grasp the plurality of discourses, institutions and modes of power that constitute modern society. This means that though Foucault is strongly influenced by theoretical positions such as structuralism or Marxism, he rejects any single analytic framework and approaches modernity from the perspectives of psychiatry, medicine, criminology and sexuality.

An another important thinker who has been influenced by the structuralists' writings at the same time pointing its limitations, is Derrida. His poststructuralist and postmodern writings often prove itself as the attempt to deconstruct the Western metaphysics of identity, of the presence of the self to itself in consciousness. According to him, the philosophical tradition, from the time of Plato, has been privileged the concept of the same: the aim of philosophical thought has been to reveal the essential characteristics that two things hold in common. The discovery of such essences depends on a movement of consciousness through the experience of multiplicity to the recognition of the

underlying unity. This movement depends on the suppression of differences in favour of similarities and on the ontological designation of similarities and essences as "more real" than apparent differences. Derrida maintains the view that we cannot have access to something that is outside philosophy, its absolute other or absolute negation. From the beginning, philosophy has been obsessed with its other, so it is foolhardy to think that contemporary writer could discover some negation of philosophy that could stand outside it. Derrida wants deconstruction, difference, and play to subvert and unsettle traditional forms of thought from within.

But Derrida has not altogether rejected structuralism. For him, language finds its source in "difference" as the linguist Saussure had claimed. The arbitrary nature of linguistic signs and their constitution through difference, are the chief notions by means of which Saussure attempted to explain *langue* as a system. The idea of difference compels the insulation of *langue* as self-contained system. "in language, there are only differences", says Saussure.[6] Though Derrida accepts Saussurean contribution to the inseparability of the signifier from signified, the main problem with Saussure, says Derrida, is that for Saussure, the signified is a determinate "idea" or a "meaning" fixed by the conjunction of word and thought. This would take us to the view that the signified could exist as the "pure concept" or "pure thought" independent of the signifier. Meaning, according to Derrida is created only by the play of difference in the process of signification. Writing does not refer to a script as such, but to the spacing inherent in the notion of difference. Differance permits all thought, speech and writing, and makes possible the opposition between the signifier and the signified. Difference indicates that difference involves an integration of the "spatial" and "temporal". Derrida by breaking away from the Saussurean distinction between synchrony and diachrony, argues that once this distinction is abandoned, difference is recognized to exist only within the temporal process of deferring, continual loss of present to future and to past. Signification only operates through difference or "trace". It is "origin of all repetition, origin of ideality...is no more ideal than real, no more intelligible than sensible, no more transparent signification than an opaque energy and no concept of metaphysics can describe it.[7] All signs and all texts include traces of others. Language, for Derrida, is the active force for differentiation present in trace from in all consciousness.[8]

At least in the past two decades postmodernism has become a dominating movement in the cultural, social and intellectual fields everywhere. In philosophy, a new awareness has entered which allows philosophers to look at things and theories in a new perspective. Thinkers like Heidegger, Gadamer, Ricoeur, Habermas, Derrida, Rorty, Lyotard and others are related to this movement by their innovative approach and insights into the philosophical problems. As a result of this, postmodernism has produced new political and social theories, which throw new light into the old problems. The postmodernists do not have one single perspective or method. But generally it is agreed that

postmodernism has emerged as a reaction to the modern tradition and traditional problems. Traditionalistic approach to history, politics, culture, theory etc., was questioned by the postmodernists. New discourses and new openings have entered into the postmodernism. It is a new discourse and in this, established paradigms were questioned and replaced by the postmodernism.

If there is no agreement among the thinkers of postmodernism to the issues then how they known as postmodernists?. Such an approach is not new in philosophy. For example. when analytic philosophy emerged as an important movement in philosophy. it was noted that all analytical philosophers do not have some common themes or methodologies, but what was common to all, is the method of analysis. though the method of analysis differed among themselves. So even though there is no common principles among the postmodernists, they are known as postmodernists because postmodernism emerged as a revolt to modernism and modernists principles. One way of defining this movement is that it is the movement, which emerged after modern period. Though there is no unified theory or common set of positions among the supporters of postmodernists, for the above reason they are known as postmodernists.

It is true that in modernity, there was political, social and cultural transformations. In fact, modernity emerged as a reaction to traditional society and was characterized by innovation, novelty and dynamism. Thus prior to this modern period there was "premodern" period. Since premodern has not contributed much to the development of human race, we consider the modern and postmodern period as more important than the premodern period. In modern period, reason was considered as the source of progress in knowledge. Some modernists went to the extent of believing that reason was the only source of knowledge. It is the foundation of knowledge according to them. No doubt, modernity has produced many welcoming changes in the human society. One such change was the industrial transformation. Modernity also called for cultural transformation. New technologies and new modes of transformation and communication—all there are important features of modernism. It allowed urbanization, rationalization, bureaucratization, industrialization etc., which definitely have moved the human progress many step further.

But the evil effects or ill effects of modernization are too many. The industrialization has alienated the common man and woman from the society. They were removed from the public sphere. The colonialization reduced man to a machine. Man's values were lost. Modernity was the rule of domination and control. Horkhemier and Adorno very rightly defined it as a process whereby reason turned into its opposite and modernity's promises of liberation masked form of oppressive and domination. Postmodernism objects to the ontological and epistemological premises of modernity and works for a reproduction of meaning. It rejects the traditional identity of a discourse and explains how it is not possible to reduce the plurality of human values. It also rejects the hierarchy

in culture, and celebrate the notion of plurality of cultures.

The development of social theories and discourse are the two new important contributions of postmodernism. Postmodernism also support relativism, irrrationalism and nihilism. One can always see the connection between postmodernism on the one hand, structuralism, and post-structuralism on the other. Postmodernism adopts the techniques developed by structuralism and poststructuralism. It must be admitted that philosophy as discourse becomes possible through the techniques of poststructuralism and postmodernism.

NOTES

1. Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, tr. Wade Baskin. McGraw Hill, New York, 1966, p. 14.
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Ibid.* p.120.
4. Ricoeur, *The Conflict of Interpretations*, ed. Don Ihde and tr. Denis Savage, Northwestern University Press, Evanston, 1974, p.84.
5. Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, tr. Robert Czerny, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1978, p.70.
6. Saussure, op. cit., p.120.
7. Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, tr.G.Spivak, 1977, p.65.
8. *Ibid*, p.51.

4

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE PERIYA TIRUVANTĀDI OF SAINT NAMMĀ ḺVĀR

V.K.S.N. RAGHAVAN

Among the important hymns of the *Divya-Prabandha* of the Āḻvārs, the Periya Tiruvantādi is so unique that it is called the great and glorious Antādi - " Periya Tiru-Antādi"; and, it is hailed to be the quintessance of the Atharvana-Veda. This hymn consists of 87 songs in Venbā metre; in Stanza 75, the saint asks the supreme Lord whether He is greater than himself(the saint). An attempt is made herein to highlight the mysticism and the philosophy of the Āḻvārs while translating the introductory part of the hymn and just a few songs.

The first *Taniyan* song is in praise of the saint-poet Nammāḻvār.

The Tamil *Taniyan*:

(i) mundurra nenje! muyarrit- taritturaittu
vandittu vāyāra vāḻttiye —chanda
muruhurūm solai-sūḻ moypūm porunal
kurukūran māran per kūru.

Oh mind! you are, indeed, interested in carrying out righteous acts. So, may you divert all your endeavour in understanding and explaining the memorable songs of St Nammāḻvār (especially, the Periya Tiruvantādi) after (i) prostrating at the holy feet of the Āḻvār, (ii) praising the author Saint Śaṭhakopa abundantly, and (iii) reciting incessantly the sacred names of St Śaṭhakopa-Māran, who hails from Tirukkurukūr (Āḻvār Tirunagari), (i) which is on the banks of the holy, fertile and fragrant Tamrapami river and (ii) which is surrounded by honey-laden trees and flower-garden.

1. Muyarric- cumandeḻundu mundurra neñje,
iyarruvāy emmoḍu nī kūḍi — nayappuḍaiya
nāvīn toḍaik- kilaviy uḻpodivom, narpūvaip
pūvīnra vaṇṇan pugaḻ.

Oh my mind! though you go striving better and ahead of me, prithee-let us go together to sing in praise of the Lord, let us join hands to compose the sweet hymn on Him who resembles dark-blue Kāyā flower.

2 pugaḻvom paḻippom pugaḻom paḻiyom.
igaḻvom madippom madiyom — igaḻom, marru
engalmāl ! sengan-māl ! sīral nī, tīvinaiyom
engalmāl ! kaṇḍāy ivai.

If we begin to praise Him, we would have just behitted Him (for his greatness is beyond our reach); if we refrain from praising Him, then also we are despised. If we make an attempt to think of Him, then also we could just degrade Him; if we don't think about Him, even then we are at loss for we ignore Him. Oh our supreme Lord! O Lord of red lotuslike eyes! it is because of our most heinous sins, that we cannot do anything with respect to Thee.

3. Ivaiyanre nalla ivaiyanre tīya.
ivaiyenru ivaiyarivanelum — ivaiyellām
ennāl aḍaippu nīkkoṇṇādu, Iraiyavane !
ennāl seyarpāladu en?

(St. Śaṭhakopa makes a confession as it were, " What am I to do"): Though I see what is good and what is evil, I don't know – what am I to do? For I am unable to stick to the good and refrain from evil- such a right path is hard to follow (Hope you will come and guide me to do good alone).

4. Ennin migu pugaḻār yāvare. pinnaiyum marru
eṇṇil migu pugaḻen yānallāl — enna
karuñjodik- kaṇṇan kaḍal puraiyum, śīlap
peruñjodikku ennenjāṭperru?

As my mind has already taken to the service of the supreme Lord of unparalleled effulgence (i) who is dark as the ocean (compassionate towards all aquatic creatures), and (ii) who is infinite, graceful and glorious, it is certain that there is no one more praiseworthy than I: none but I deserve immense praise.

5. Perra-tāy nīye. pirappitta tandai nī.
marraiyār āvārum nī, pesil — erreyo
Māya ! māmāyavalai māyamulai vāyvaitta.
nīyammā ! kāṭṭum neri.

Being the foremost/all-round relative. O God. you are my mother who gave me birth; you are the progenitor/father as well: even you are ācārya (preceptor). guru (master) and such other relatives and companions: how wonderful it is-

that you are extremely divine and par excellence! How can I describe your immense power, you, even as a babe sucked the life of that Pūtanā, demoness/ mother at her poisonous bosom? Your ways are indeed, inscrutable.

6. Neṟi kāṭṭi nīkkudiyo, ninpāl karumā
murimeni kāṭṭudiyo, menāl — ariyomai
en-seyvān enninay Kaṇṇane ! īduraiyāy
en-seydāl en-paḍom yām ?

Oh Almighty, Lord Kṛṣna is it that you are going to direct me in the injunctions of Śāstras in such a way to follow the path of action (*karma*), knowledge (*jñāna*) or ardent devotion (*bhakti*) and thus divert me from the direct service to you and to your ardent attendant-the service that would itself be the fruit as well? Or whether would you present your *divyamaṅgalavigraha,* the direct vision of your bewitching, black and brimming effulgent form and thus make my action suddenly successful? O Lord Kṛṣna! what, indeed; are you going to make with us who are ignorant about our future? prithee please reply! whatever you do, we are only pawns in your hands.

7. 'Yāme aruvinaiyom seyom,' en neñjinār
tāmey- aṅukkarāyc- cārndoḻindār — pūmeya
semmādai ninmārvil servittu, pāriḍanda
Ammā ! nin pādattarugu.

Oh Lord (great Boar) having borne the lotus-born, great and molten-gold like Goddess Lakṣmī on your chest! you have lifted aloft Mother Earth. My mind (heart) as a close confidante - has already approached very near your pair of lotuslike feet; however, we - the most sinful - are far from your, Oh Lord.

8. Arugum suvaḍum terivuṇarom, anbe
perugum migaviduven? pesīr — parugalām
paṇbuḍaiyīr ! pāraḷandīr ! pāviyem kaṇ-kāṇbariya
nuṇbuḍaiyīr ! nummai numakku.

(St.Sathakopa says: though we are far off, now hope that we would arrive at your Abode very soon)- Oh the most subtle supreme Being (-that we cannot grasp you even a little because of our enormous sins)! Oh the most auspicious Lord (-that you are nectarine, and therefore everyone can enjoy Thee in fullest measure)! O Thou- the supreme Lord who have measured the whole, vast earth (and thus embraced everyone/everything on this earth)! neither do we know how to approach you, nor do we understand " who you are" by any mark or symbol. Nevertheless. Oh Lord! our love towards you grows immensely; why is it so? Please do explain.

9. 'Numakkaḍiyom' enrenru nondu uraitten, mālār
tamakkavar tām sārvariyarānāl ? — emakkini
yādānum ākiḍukān neñje, avar tiṟatte
yādānum sindit- tiru.

(Referring to the Lord in His Trivikrama form, St. Śaṭhakopa addresses to his mind again:) O Mind! even with regard to the devotees, if the supreme Lord, Who has encompassed the whole earth, is not within the reach, what do we gain by whole-heartedly appealing in anguish – " We are your servitors; hence, please give us your vision (*darśana*)"? When we don't like anything but your vision, whatever takes place, let it be so; even if You are indifferent to us, we don't bother. Oh Mind! rest awhile thinking on Him alone.

10 Irunālvar īraindin meloruvar, ettoḍu
orunālvar oriruvar allāl — tirumārku
yāmār vaṇakkamār e-pāvam nanneñje !
nāmā migavuḍaiyom nāḷ?

We are absolutely nothing – when we find that the eight Vasus, eleven Rudras, twelve Ādityas and two Aśvins who incessantly adore Him. Even to think about reaching Him for us, is sinful because, O heart, it is just our greed that makes us unduly over-enthusiastic.

24 Tāne tanittonral tannaḷappu onrilladān,
tāne pirargaṭkum tarronral — tāne
ilaikkirpār kīḻmelām mīṇḍamaippān ānāl
alakkirpār pārinmel ār ?

He is the origin for all. But He has no origin. He is unparalleled; Were the cosmos tend to become chaos the Lord, on His own recreates it. None on earth could encompass/measure Him.

53 Onruṇḍu senganmāl yān uraippadu, unnaḍiyārkku
en-seyvadu enrey- irutti nī — nin-pugaḻil
vaigum-tam sindaiyilum marrinido, nīyavarkku
vaikundam enraruḷum vān ?

Let me tell you this O Lord of red lotuslike eyes! you wait upon your devotees for fulfilling their desires. If you were to bestow on them the dwelling in your supreme Abode (Vaikuṇṭha) through your ineffable grace, then would it be more sweet than their state of contemplating yourself in their heart?

75 Puviyum iruvisumbum ninnagatta, nīyen
seviyin vaḻipugundu ennuḷḷāy — avivinri
yān periyan nī periyai enbadanai yār aṟivār
ūnparugu nemiyāy ! uḷḷu.

(The saint exclaims:) " Oh Lord ! the Earth and the supreme Heaven are within You (your control); however, You have entered my heart through my ears; now tell me, am I not greater than You ? Who knows about Your supremacy ? Please inquire Yourself, Oh Lord who holds the Wheel (Cakra) that has slain the enemies in a trice."

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